THE CHAPLAIN OF ST. CATHERINE'S

By HERMAN J. HEUSER

CANON SHEEHAN OF DONERAILE

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BY

HERMAN J. HEUSER, D.D.

AUTHOR OF "CANON SHEEHAN OF DONERAILE," "MOTHER MARY VERONICA, A BIOGRAPHY," "PASTOR HALLOFT," "AN EX-PRELATE'S MEDITATIONS," ETC.

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✠ PATRICK CARDINAL HAYES

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THE CHAPLAIN OF SAINT CATHERINE'S

CHAPTER I

How Father Martin Became Chaplain

St. Catherine's was a Convent of cloistered nuns. The community, though generally regarded as being rather "uppish," had an admirable rule of life which not only called for but also daily tested the spirit of humility and charity in its members. Father Martin who, while giving at first the impression of being a man of severe views, had in reality a rather humorous turn of mind, was known to have facetiously referred to St. Catherine's as a House of polite Correction, a pleasantry which the Mother Abbess did not apparently resent. She was aware that the priest knew the foibles of pious folk. Some wag reported her as once having said of Father Martin that she thanked God he was not their confessor, for if he were, her nuns would, she feared, be perpetually em-

ployed in doing penances, at which her motherly heart ached for their sakes. On the other hand, with the big crowd of worldly sinners who had flocked around the confessional of Father Martin while he was assistant at the Cathedral, he had always been a great favorite and apparently helpful.

But how did he become chaplain of St. Catherine's? That was an accident. He had literally put his foot on the visiting archbishop's "Cappa Magna"; that is to say, he had stepped on and innocently rent that distinguished and involving piece of vesture, which is worn on great occasions by men who, though having a divine call with long silken trails, are at times small in earthly size. His Grace being short of stature, the train was consequently extended, which was really the tailor's fault, whereas Father Martin, though sympathetic, was short-sighted. He had for the moment mistaken the emblem of high dignity for what appeared to be an humble bit of sanctuary carpet; and thereby brought about a shocking debacle within sight of the choir, and proportionate disgrace on himself.

The error was pardonable enough, and the Archbishop would readily have overlooked it.

But Father Martin in a frivolous mood had related the matter to an elderly rector of a neighboring diocese who happened to be visiting at the time, and that within the hearing (though unsuspected) of His Grace who was making his thanksgiving in the sacristy corner close by the vestry. The latter complained to the Bishop about the caustic tongue of one of the episcopal household, dwelling on the danger of irreverence for authority in a member of the Cathedral Chapter. Only for this, the Bishop, who was goodnatured, might have ignored the lapse. He knew Father Martin's sterling worth as a priest, and he valued his learning. In fact he had at one time designed him for a professorship in the Seminary; but the rector of that venerable institution put a spoke in the wheel. He also had had a taste of the ruthless humor of the spectacled curate at the Cathedral. The latter had been saying smart things about his experiences in the north of Ireland. Now it happened that the purpled aristocrat who presided over the seedlings of the diocesan clerical shrubbery derived his blue blood from Derry fountains and was accordingly scandalized by Father Martin's perversity, with the result that he objected to the proposed appointment.

His lordship, however well disposed, deemed it his duty to speak to Father Martin in view of what the Archbishop had said about the frivolous deportment of the unfortunate yet apparently unrepentant curate.

It must be said that Father Martin was not only learned and very shortsighted, but, like most uncanonized saints, uncommonly sensitive. He reasoned that either men who are weak-eyed should not be put on ceremonies, or else episcopal trains should be kept out of their way. He was perfectly aware that the Bishop had retained him at the Cathedral because he was an efficient worker; and the people liked him because of his earnestness and his kindness, especially to the poor. He had oddly enough declined repeated assignments to what were in common estimation desirable parishes. Some said he was waiting for something better; others thought that he dreaded the responsibility, which was true. Outside his devotion to the duties of assistant at the Cathedral, and occasional services as substitute for the Bishop's secretary, his preferences were all in the line of study and books, with a fair appreciation of music and other cultural arts. The men around him found him genial, yet inde-

pendent. He was at times aggressive, and mostly silent. When he did talk it was usually to the point. Altogether, his temperament, while not unfitting him for administration, made it difficult for him to adjust himself to certain methods in common use regarding the material upbuilding of religion. Anywhere but at the Cathedral he would have come in conflict with ordinarily tolerated pastoral conventions of which he openly disapproved.

Just at this time the nuns at St. Catherine's were gently clamoring for a regular chaplain. They had buried two mass-priests within fifteen months previously; and the Bishop was at his wits' ends to supply the vacancy. He had to humor the religious whose connections with the indevout outside world gave them a certain prestige. Then there were the pupils, graduates and postgraduates, *Enfants de Marie* and *Mères Chrétiennes.* They had a preference for ascetic-looking priests as the "opus operans" in sacramental ministrations and at the periodical receptions, the impressive celestialness of which festive occurrences had gained fame for St. Catherine's in feminine circles that counted. The Bishop was also aware that the world was

moving, and that the day of woman's successful assertion of presidential prerogatives was not far distant. On the other hand, it was difficult to give them just what they wanted at St. Catherine's. The maturer shepherds who had the reputation of superior gifts claimed their well-deserved posts of importance in the pastoral domain; besides, most of them were a bit too corpulent to fit in with the reputation of a chaplain, who should be, at sight, "a regular saint," such as the limited but influential circumference of St. Catherine's permitted.

Father Martin had had no thought of asking for the chaplaincy or for any other place or change. But when the Bishop adverting to the recent misstep jocosely said:

"Father Martin, you are breaking my heart with your clever tongue; and I have half a mind to send you to St. Catherine's," the curate took up the suggestion at once by exclaiming with serious emphasis,

"I wish you would!"

"Are you in earnest?"

"I never was more so. If I have not asked for the place it was simply because I do not want to choose my own berth and abandon the pastoral work for which I was ordained. But if

you send me it is all right; for it gives me what I most desire—independence and leisure for reading."

"'Independence!'—you will have to reckon with a Mother Abbess, and with the prayers of the nuns, who can break anybody's heart with their violent stormings of heaven," said the Bishop.

"I don't mind the Abbess. She is a woman of sense, and I shall pray that she may live long. If you say so, I go gladly."

And so it turned out. St. Catherine's was a rather large estate. It enclosed not only gardens and considerable pasturage at one side of the city, but had a commodious building for the chaplain at the exit of the grounds. Father Martin was happy. He was pastor of a model flock of saints. Sick calls were within easy reach. The salary, if moderate, was all-sufficient for his needs, and moreover came to him without his having to announce collections. His separate ménage allowed him a housekeeper to look after his domestic comfort; and the "Sisters' man-of-all-work" was at his beck for service if he should need him.

When his library had been brought over, and

he found himself comfortably settled in his new and commodious home, there came upon him, for the first time in his life, a feeling of lonesomeness. Never had such a sense of homesickness haunted him before, and in vain did he seek to dispel it by an appeal to the bookshelves around him. He had always said and believed these volumes were unfailing good friends, that he should need no others while he had access to his library shelves. So they were in sooth. They would talk to him in all moods; and when he was weary of their wisdom or humor he could put them down without giving offence or apology. But now he began to realize that, whilst they were at his command at all times and talked to him in all moods, it was a one-sided conversation. They did not listen like the children, nor did they respond intelligently when he addressed himself to them. He wanted to have an occasional word as well as being talked to. His heart went out in a new way to the Bishop, for he could realize the loneliness of one in authority, a prisoner without chains but hungering for the gleam of sunshine that comes with brotherly intercourse. He was independent, he thought, but isolated.

The Bishop, who was a sagacious as well as

a kindly man, had foreseen this new feature of Father Martin's chaplaincy. He had said on bidding him good bye:

"Father Martin, we shall not be too far away from you or you from us, to be often together. Remember you are still my curate."

To which Father Martin had answered: "Thank you, Bishop, I could not ever forget the pleasant hours I have spent in your household, even though I did put my foot in it with the Archbishop."

A few days after Father Martin's departure, his old confrères, who missed his quiet genial ways, and who found that the newly appointed curate was unable to adjust his conscience to a game of "Five Hundred" by not knowing how to play it, resolved to invade in a body the monastic precincts of the chaplain of St. Catherine's. They picked up the jovial pastor of St. Bridget's parish on the way, and with much knocking on the stairway announced the purpose of carrying the chaplain back *in corpore,* unless he would furnish the party with the old brand of cigars and the bowl to which on certain festive occasions they had been accustomed.

Our chaplain was delighted. He knew how to

brew a good arrack punch, and if he smoked very moderately he kept invariably a good sort of Habana ribbon. The result of the meeting was a set of informal resolutions to repeat the visit; and when a few days later Father Martin received a mysterious case marked "glass," with the compliments of the Cathedral Chapter, including the Bishop, he knew that his loneliness was being dispelled by the cheery prospects of inroads on his preserves from his old friends.

It is needless to emphasize that the nuns, and all their apron-stringed vassals, were made happy by the appointment; for Farther Martin was thin, said the prayers with a sonorous voice and beautiful inflection, chanted Mass with the correctness of a St. Ambrose, and was altogether a very superior "saint." Besides, he was learned and one could ask him questions. They knew that his brethren generally spoke well of him, despite their having noticed an occasional gleam in his eyes which gave due warning of hidden forces concealing pungent satire that would humble anyone who might play the cad or prig with him.

CHAPTER II

Father Martin Receives a Testimonial

The visit of the Fathers to the Chaplain of St. Catherine's was thoroughly enjoyed by all concerned, including Father Martin. In a short time his quarters became the regular meeting place for periodical "round table" talks at which the priests, and occasionally some intimate lay friends, exchanged opinions on current topics and more often on problems of the pastoral ministry.

Among the Cathedral folk it had been agreed to give public expression of the esteem and indeed affection in which Father Martin had been held among them. The members of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, the Knights of Columbus, and others who combined in the Holy Name Society, and who were representative of the best element of Catholic manhood in the parish, if not in the diocese also, readily and enthusiastically seconded the proposal. They hoped to retain him as Honorary President, if not

also as counsellor, who would enliven their gatherings from time to time, as of old, by his helpful and genial presence.

He was known however to be averse to personal ovations, and despite his talent of organizer which showed itself in a clear-headed gift of designing rather than in taking command, he avoided with an almost girlish shyness any demonstration directing attention upon himself, or indeed any manifestation of gratitude for acts of that off-handed generosity which was part of his nature. In deference to this known sensitiveness it had been arranged to have an informal meeting at which to present him with a substantial purse for the ostensible purpose of furnishing his new quarters with suitable bookcases to be filled with some choice volumes to his taste. A love for books was in fact his chief weakness—and one which but for his normal poverty would have led to unlimited extravagance in the purchase of rare literary treasures.

One evening, quite incidentally, a clerical visitor, stumbling over an upturned set of the "Catholic Encyclopedia" on the stairway, and finding that it kept doubtful company with an

Aramaic Version of the Talmud, expressed the hope that the Young Men's Sodality would make Father Martin a present of a bookcase with an inscription "From Your Grateful Orphans." The suggestion was improved by someone adding that the bookshelves be made of willow wood with the dedication "From Your Bereaved and Weeping Willies." This led to the subject of Father Martin's taking French leave from the parish and violating the conventions which call for a "Farewell Reception" on such occasions.

"If there is anything I abominate," said the chaplain, "it is those parochial schemes to drag pastors and assistants into the theatrical limelight for the purpose of expressing personal admiration. You are made to exhibit yourself, pretend to be surprised and touched, and to deliver a sentimental or a witty speech. Next you are expected to shake hands as if you vowed eternal friendship and gratitude to everybody in the parish. You pretend that you disbelieve the exaggerated laudations of yourself and attribute them wholly to the exalted position which you occupy in the Church. All but the gullible people and fools know that you and your friends are lying. Finally you go on for

hours to invite prospective nightmares by overdoses of ice cream with irreconcilable pickles."

At this the neighboring pastor of St. Bridget's, who dropped in occasionally to consult Father Martin on trout fishing and weather forecasts, appeared at the door, and, having caught the topical note, promptly took up the part of an objector:

"Why, Father Martin, these are means which, as my Jesuit friends at St. Ignatius Church, who compete with me for the honors of disinterested charity, would say, 'justify the end.' If the circulation of laudatory hot air and the muscular exercise of handshaking with a distinguished individual are but the prelude or fitting accompaniment of a substantial purse, their sincerity and thus their legitimate use are proved thereby without any doubt."

"You are perverting the theology of the Society, which is that 'the end justifies the means,' though St. Ignatius would disown it—I mean, the principle, not the Society. But be that as it may, I hold that wherever money enters as a personal offering to the priest it tends to lower his dignity. An appeal to the conscience or the generosity of the people in support of

some charity, or for the building and adornment of the church and its legitimate adjuncts, is a different thing from a gift to the man who is, as the Apostle puts it, supposed to be content with needful food and raiment. I quite understand that individuals have their likes and preferences which cause them to give gladly to a priest whom they hold in personal honor or esteem. They realize too that he has individual needs. That fact itself would suffice to secure the average cleric against want at any time, unless he has forfeited the sympathy of those who can aid him, through previous neglect of their spiritual interests. But popularity which puts a priest in the way of making financial success for private uses does not differ from that of the popular operator in the world who collects wealth. It invariably stresses the worth of material things and entails a proportionate loss of that spiritual prestige which is the real and permanent asset in the upbuilding of religion. I do not say it is always bad. The personal influence of a leader in the moral world, such as General Booth, for example, may effect much good. He has made the Salvation Army movement a real success. It has diminished vice and the misery that results from it.

Whether it has proportionately advanced the cause of true religion—to do which is the priest's chief business—appears questionable. Philanthropy merely as an ethical virtue is not the same as Christian charity. No doubt natural virtue furnishes an excellent basis for the supernatural life which Our Lord taught His disciples; but it is not the same thing."

"But how could we build up the material church in this new country if we did not take a personal interest in its financial support, which means of course the handling as well as the questing of money from our people?"

"I suppose the Apostles had the same difficulty, especially under the conditions of the Roman missions. Yet they were to do their founding of churches without possessing or personally collecting money. I do not believe we would have to handle the money nor even to ask for it, if we put our full energies—those we spend on scheming and running about to promote financial success—into awakening and sustaining the faith of Catholics by preaching, as did the early disciples of Christ whose successors we are supposed to be. How did the men that built the magnificent churches in the Middle Ages do it? We call the thirteenth and

preceding centuries the Ages of Faith. If faith built those monuments of architectural art which are still our wonder, would not the faith of our Irish people accomplish the same today? The virtue of charity is but the bloom which ripens invariably into the fruit of generosity under the sunlight of that same faith, if properly sustained."

"But, Father Martin, our Irish people are mostly poor. It was the work of wealthy princes that raised the magnificent churches of the Middle Ages."

"I doubt it. The great churches and institutions of learning and charity were the outcome of popular Catholic organization such as the guilds and monastic centres with the monks as leaders of the laborers. Indeed, if what we build today is not the result of contributions from the wealthy but comes mostly from the poor or middle class, it proves what I say. While rich men outside the Church are made to sustain philanthropy, why must we fail to move wealthy Catholics to support our churches on similar grounds? Whether our people are poor or rich, they are likely to be generous if we make their religion a reality. As it is, the virtue we call faith is often nothing more than

mechanical superstition, for the indulgence of which we assess them at so much a head."

"The fact remains, with all due respect to your opinion, Father Martin, that we could not build our churches and schools if we priests did not take a hand in collecting the money for that purpose. Now, if an occasion like a change of appointment gives opportunity to raise funds for a useful purpose through the popularity of a priest, at a reception or otherwise, I don't see why we should not welcome it or at least make use of it, even if it involves undesirable publicity."

"I quite agree with you. We need money for the upbuilding of the material Church, and for the support of our schools and charities, as well as for the priests' housing and personal needs. But I maintain that we should get it quite abundantly by our preaching and pastoral ministry without resorting to methods which make the impression that a priest values his own comforts and ambitions, or the possession of money for his personal uses."

"And don't you think a priest has as much right to a comfortable home and living as any other Christian who secures the same lawfully for his family and himself?"

"He has a right to a living, but not to possession of superfluity or luxury."

"You seem to assume, Father Martin," objected one of the party, "that every priest is pledged to the vow of poverty which is taken by religious as an evangelical counsel?"

"Not at all. The vow of religious poverty does, as I understand it, imply not merely the renunciation of superfluous and otherwise legitimate possession, but the disposing of even that which serves for the uses or necessities of life. The ascetical virtue of poverty incumbent on the Apostles leaves them the choice of the things which they need and which are useful to them, whereas religious poverty assigns that choice to a superior or the will of another. Neither the one nor the other is supposed by the Apostolic rule to lay up store or to guard possession, unless it be with some definite purpose to further religious ends. The secular cleric calls his belongings, his bed and his home, however poor, his own; not so the religious. Neither of them is entitled by his priestly profession to own what he does not actually employ in the service of the Church or charity, I take it."

"But if he does not provide against future want he may be without the things he needs when sickness or old age render him incapable of supporting himself."

"Such a condition in a priest is hardly conceivable. Both the common sentiment of benevolence or charity and the traditions and constitutions of ecclesiastical administration secure him a title for support."

"Might not that support be the sop thrown to the pauper, which is worse than a corner in the poorhouse?"

"Hardly that, I fancy. If a priest wants comforts beyond the ordinary it is because he has forgotten the principles of his training and I would say also his pledge of Apostolic living. That living means renunciation of the luxuries which the man of the world values in the material order and may be entitled to according to circumstances. The vow of celibacy; the promise to serve in the ministry at the risk of health and even life, under obedience to the Bishop; the injunction given to the Apostles to leave all if they would follow Christ, the call of Peter and of Matthew from legitimate pursuits of gain—all these things have little meaning unless they import personal renunciation,

not as a religious profession, but as a fulfilment of the command to the Apostles to go on their missions without scrip or purse. They were to make their home in the midst of the faithful and find their sustenance among them; but they were not to gather money or own property for their personal use. Indeed the Sacred Text hardly leaves any doubt that they were not to handle money, even for religious uses: *'Beatus vir qui post aurum non abiit nec speravit in pecunia et thesauris.'* "

"Ah, but Ben Sirach, the wise man, adds: *'Quis est hic et laudabimus eum? fecit mirabilia.'* As if to say: He is a wonder, and wonders are exceptions to the law of nature or religion."

"Yes, if you pervert the text. Its true meaning is of course that the man who despises the quest of money or even the hope of any gain from his labors will earn abundant blessings and accomplish wonderful things in his life. The Greek word used by the grandson of Ecclesiasticus, who translated from the Hebrew, like the Latin term *beatus,* implies the possession of every kind of blessing, temporal as well as spiritual, so that the renunciation of money quest or desire in this case entails the attain-

ment of all that a wise man can want or desire, As for the practice of the Apostles, who give us the interpretation of the Old Testament wisdom, no less than that of the injunctions of Christ to his priests, we have the testimony of the chief of the Apostles:

> It is not reasonable that we should leave the preaching of God's word; wherefore select ye men of good repute and wisdom whom we may appoint over this business, so that we may give ourselves to the ministry of prayer and preaching;

or the injunctions to Timothy by St. Paul, when he reminds the young priest ordained by him not to enter into secular negotiations, but to be content with food and raiment. There is every indication that Timothy had to superintend the building of churches in Asia Minor, Greece and the islands, where the converts could not make use of the synagogues as houses of prayer. Reading the Chronicles of the Kings we come across instances when temple and institutional upbuilding among the Hebrews were in special demand. Here too the ordinances of Almighty God positively forbid priests to be purveyors dealing with the finances of the parochial needs, unless it be through intermediaries."

"Why, if I remember rightly, Father Martin," said one of the guests, "it was the High Priest himself who put the chest for the collections at the gate or near the altar, and made the priests count it so as to pay the workmen who were repairing the temple. I recall the fact because I had an argument some time ago with a book-agent who happened to be also a Protestant minister. He wanted to sell Bibles in the parish. Catholics to whom he offered his wares refused, and he wondered what we had against the Bible. I told him that his Bible was not the genuine article; it had been tampered with by Luther, who in his translation omitted things which had been there when it was first written. The fellow became quite indignant and answered that what Luther had taken out was what the Popes had put in, namely, selling indulgences to commit sin, and making money by pretending to build churches. When he had gone, I picked up a tract on indulgences and incidentally a reference to the history of restoring the temple at the time of King Joas. There it stated what I have said, namely, that the priests had charge of the finances."

With this Father Martin got up and, taking a Douay version of the Old Testament from the

shelf, began to turn the leaves, saying: "Let us see. It must be in the IV Book of Kings, if you speak of Joas."

He soon found the place and read out:

> All the money of the sanctified things which is brought into the temple of the Lord by those that pass, which is offered for the price of a soul, and which of their own accord and of their own free heart they bring into the temple of the Lord, let the priests take it according to their order and repair the house wheresoever they see anything that needs repair.

"That is the passage," the rector interposed.

"Very well," said Father Martin. "But did you note that this command of the King was not followed; and that, after twenty-three years in which the former priests had appropriated the money offered for their own personal use, the new King protested against the abuse and called on the entire body of clerics, priests and levites, not to take the money? It is true that the High Priest is subsequently spoken of as placing a chest near the altar so that the people entering and passing by might make their offerings. But it is also stated that a king's officer or scribe was to take charge and count the money under the direction of the priest. '*Pro-*

hibiti sunt sacerdotes ultra accipere pecuniam a populo.' When the gazophylacium was emptied periodically, the King's secretary was called to take charge in presence of the High Priest. '*Ascendebat scriba regis, et pontifex, effundebantque et numerabant pecuniam quae inveniebatur in domo Domini.*' Our Douay version and indeed St. Jerome himself rather mistranslate the old Hebrew records. The priests were quite willing, it seems, to be freed from the obligation of collecting and counting the money. The King did not need to forbid their doing so. The true meaning of the word *jeotu* is *contenti erant,* that is, 'they were content,' and not *prohibitique sunt*—'they were forbidden.' Josephus has some remarks, in commenting on the passage, to show that conditions were pretty much what they are in our own day. He says the priests were glad enough that they did not have to take up the collections from the people, for there were many among the latter who were hard to get anything from, and who complained at having to make offerings for the temple. What the text makes plain is this, that no one was to be forced or browbeaten into giving to the service of the Church; all the offerings were to be voluntary.''

The discussion was becoming one-sided, and Father Martin himself felt disposed to drop the subject. They had started with the thesis that testimonials of appreciation to a priest when accompanied by a substantial purse as token of sincerity, was a thing to be commended by every right-minded member of the flock, as well as by the shepherd himself. The chaplain of St. Catherine's had controverted the thesis and ended by claiming that the priests of Joas's time were to leave the handling of money for the building and service of the temple to one of the royal scribes. Someone deemed it advisable at this juncture to change the topic and said he had it on good authority that the parishioners of the Cathedral had voted to give Father Martin a testimonial in the shape of a modest sum of money. They thought this desirable since a chaplain of nuns who had made a vow of poverty might need such interference. The Knights and members of the St. Vincent de Paul Society thought it their duty to show their sympathy. Father Martin was silent for a little while. Then he said:

"Oh, very well. I shall acknowledge the receipt of the testimonial and thank the men for their charity to the poor of the parish, for

whose benefit the gift should promptly be turned over through our honorable rector of the Cathedral. You may think me a bit priggish in the matter. By the way," he added, as he threw away the end of a cigar, "I have just come on a capital story in a French volume, which I want you to know. But some other time will suit better, when we have no collection for the chaplain."

We all looked at each other. The rector smiled and rose; which gave the signal for the rest of us. We knew that the testimonial would be a success; but it would not go into the chaplain's bookcase.

CHAPTER III

The Pigeons of St. Catherine's

For some time after his installation at St. Catherine's the new chaplain was looked on with a certain awe. The Sister who waited on him found him reticent at the morning meal. At other times he had a book with him in which he seemed to be absorbed. To questions about his preferences in the matter of food he either said, "Anything," or "Eggs." The answer was not satisfactory to the cook, who felt that her intentions of seasoning the greater glory of God—which was the normal and professed object of her cooking—with some special dishes for the approval of the chaplain, were not being recognized.

Being a good religious she swallowed her grudge. But she had to mention the matter to Reverend Mother by way of assuring her that she was not neglecting the proper grooming of the official shepherd of the house. Whatever she might privately think of his queer sanctity, which was suitable enough for a Trappist,

it did not seem natural in a Convent chaplain. His business was, as she understood it, to act as a safeguard to the monastery confines, to keep the outside devils and the world away from the Convent gates, to be a post of watch and defence to the Mother Abbess and her charges against intruders whom the gentle ladies could not with their soft voices bark away. Accordingly the chaplain, like the proverbial butcher's dog, had to be fed. But how could you feed him if he would not eat.

Her complaint did not meet with any enthusiasm or condolence on the part of the Superior.

"Do whatever the Father wants."

"But, Reverend Mother, he wants nothing."

"Does he refuse what you put before him?"

"Not exactly, but I don't know whether he likes it. Men have their tastes—in meat, rare or well done; in eggs, fried, poached, soft or hard boiled."

"Well, be content without knowing. It isn't good even for cooks to know everything. The Father is probably imitating St. Francis de Sales, who never asked for and never refused anything."

After that the chaplain was not molested until, on the feast of the Purification of Our

Blessed Lady the Sister brought some strawberries to the table. Now strawberries in February are, as everybody knows, an anomaly.

"Where did these come from?"

"The gardener brought them for Mother St. Ignatius on her feastday. She says, 'Would Your Reverence please say a Mass for her intention?' "

"I said Mass for her this morning," replied the Father, as he brushed aside the offered envelope. "Take the stipend back, or give it to Father Bonaventure."

Father Bonaventure had the reputation of being a saint—a Capuchin of wide experience who heard the weekly confessions at the Convent and who acted as a general resource to the poor of the district.

The Sister made no reply. But the Superior knew why the chaplain had a short time before, when she asked him to remember at Mass the Mother Assistant who was ill, obtained from the Sacristan a list of the names of the nuns in the Community. It indicated that he was thoughtful of their spiritual interests. He remembered their feasts—at the altar, which was better than verbal congratulations. More probably he took this way of regulating his own

Mass intentions, which might be interfered with by unexpected requests to celebrate monastic feastdays.

But he ate the strawberries. Thereafter he had strawberries in season or out, fresh, cooked, or preserved; for the Sister in the pantry had discovered his weakness, she thought. Later, the housekeeper at the Cathedral told her confidentially that it was cucumbers, and that Father Martin ate the strawberries most likely for penance because they were supposed to give people rheumatism and an acid disposition.

That evening the Father Chaplain looked up the gardener. He found him in the hothouse busy with his flower pots and exotics. In conversation it soon became evident that the man was not only a trained horticulturist but also well informed on other matters. The cottage in which he dwelt with his wife was a picture of modest comfort and good taste as well as thrift. There was a corner cabinet which contained books on all sorts of topics, with a predominant selection of botanical science. On inquiry the Father learned that the man was a Southerner who had come from a well-to-do family in Alabama. The grandfather had lost his property through Confederate partisanship,

being unwilling to take the oath of allegiance after the Civil War. The young man, on coming north, had engaged in service as a gardener, which allowed him to cultivate a hobby inherited from his elders. He was a good manager and the Sisters greatly valued his intelligence and care. He and Father Martin were in time to become excellent friends.

On returning through the Convent preserves the chaplain encountered a group of children who were engaged in feeding a flock of pigeons near the pond over which the white figure of Our Lady's statue stretched out its arms.

Father Martin liked birds, and he liked children, though he appeared to possess no special talent for attracting them. He had noticed, when making his afternoon visits to the chapel, the cooing of pigeons cooped in a low belfry, as it seemed, above a recess at the entry to the vestry. Their soft monotonous chant, rather soothing, was like the plaintive moan of the human voice, as if a mother were crooning over her sick child, caressing and rocking it to and fro. Sometimes the notes came in alternate sounds suggesting affectionate converse which makes love in murmuring endearments. He knew from his travels in the East the habits

of the Cushat dove making soft answer to its mate on the roof, or imitating the low undertone of a child's voice as it rehearses its song, or sings itself to sleep. The sounds were restful, with echoes of peace, and somehow created a meditative atmosphere suited for prayer. Hence Father Martin, who was not without sentiment, found in the nearness of these birds a satisfaction akin to that which steals upon the heart in solitude, that strange mingling of sadness and joy which some call *Heimweh,* others *penseroso.*

There is a quality at once chaste and alluring, in the habits as in the appearance of the dove, a quality which makes it wholly different from other birds and which has caused it to be regarded as a symbol not merely of simplicity and spirituality, but of fidelity and pure affection. In this way it is an image of the religious soul, as we find it pictured in the Sacred Scriptures, notably in the spiritual love songs of Canticles and generally in the Wisdom literature of the East.

"Father, are these turtle doves?" queried shyly one of the little maids as the priest came up to them. She had evidently been urged on by her companions or the Sister who was with

them, for they all looked expectantly to him for the answer.

"Yes, child, if you wish. There is in fact no difference between pigeons and turtle-doves. They simply derive this name from the *tur-tur* or murmuring sounds which they emit."

Seeing that the nun was one of the teachers whom he had noticed directing the larger girls at devotion in chapel, he added:

"This accounts for the fact that different nations have for these birds two (sometimes three) distinct names, one of which is practically the same in all their languages. The Hebrews and most Semitic people call the dove *tor-tor,* the Greeks, *tru-tru,* the Romans, *tur-tur,* repeating or modifying the sound which the pigeon utters. There are of course different species or varieties and mixed breeds which have their peculiarities of voice and utterance as of appearance, but in general it is true that they take their name from the sounds or habit of their speech, just as we name the coo-coo, or the whippoorwill or the crow from their respective calls.

"The Saxon *turtle* and the German *turtel* are diminutives much like the French *tourterelles* or the Italian *tortorella.*"

"Does it not seem, Father, as if the Gospel which we read at the Mass this morning made a distinction? It says that Our Lady in presenting the Holy Child in the temple, did so conforming to the Levitical Law which commanded Hebrew mothers to offer a pair of turtle-doves *or* two young pigeons."

"Quite true. Pigeons associate in pairs which, unlike other birds, keep contentedly together. Not only are they singularly devoted to each other, but they share on equal terms the care of their young. These, as a rule, consist of two nestlings which are blind for some time after their birth and are nourished by the parents until they have become quite full-fledged and are able to take care of themselves. This mothering care lasts much longer than is usual with other birds, which abandon their young as soon as these can fly and leave the nest. Moreover, the two parent pigeons divide equally the breeding and feeding of the young birdlings. They gather nourishment for themselves from the fields, but they feed their young with a milk prepared from such food in their own crops and throats. This pigeon-milk is given by the parent doves in turn, just as they both alternately sit upon the eggs from which the young

pigeons are hatched. If one of the pigeon parents dies, the other is often seen quite alone as though mourning the absence of the loved one, and the moans uttered by the solitary turtle-dove resemble closely those of human grief. The attachment of these birds to each other is unique and has been the occasion of the beautiful allusions to the love of the Divine Spouse for the soul, which we find in the Letters of the Christian Fathers, particularly St. Bernard. The Saint, writing to his sister, uses some such expressions as these:

"'Be thou, dearest sister, a true Spouse of Christ. Do not let Him depart from thee, but like the turtle-dove which, when its spouse is absent, mourns, longing for its return night and day, call thou also ever for His coming.'

"St. Gregory makes similar comment in his homilies on virginity, though I cannot remember the words. *

"You see there is a difference in offering a

* Natura turturis est si perdiderit conjugem alterum amplius non quaerere. O Sponsa Christi, assimilare et tu huic turturi ut praeter Jesum Christum Sponsum tuum non quaeras alterum amatorem. O Sponsa Christi, esto similis turturi et luge die ac nocte cum desiderio Jesu Christi Sponsi tui.—*De Modo bene vivendi ad Sororem, Cap. X. S. Bernardi Epistolae.*

Turtur ut castitatem servet amat solitudinem; animam indicat gravem, temporatam orationi meditabundam.—*S. Greg.*

pair of mother or turtle-doves that belong to each other, and in presenting two young pigeons not yet fully weaned from the home. In the one case the turtle-doves are a free pair having no nestlings. In the other the young fledglings are taken without destroying the home or separating the parents."

"But don't they separate when trained sometimes to be carriers of messages?" asked one of the Sisters.

"Yes, assuredly. Not all pigeons, however, are carrier pigeons. Training follows and develops only the native instinct in some of the species. It is analogous to what the training in religion or the vow of religious obedience implies. The vocation to it presupposes a certain disposition, a readiness to follow and faithfully carry out a given command or mission. The carrier pigeon presents a singular instance of silent and prompt obedience. The bird will not only fly directly to its home centre, sometimes at a great distance away, but it will do this with the utmost swiftness. While its ordinary movements appear slow and deliberate, its flight as a messenger is exceedingly rapid and enduring. Despite its apparent delicacy the pigeon has wonderful wing power,

which will sustain it, it is said, for more than three hundred miles. Thus it saves time by needing or seeking less rest than is customary with migrating birds.

"Besides the virtue of silent and swift movement which is the symbol of perfect obedience, the pigeon is singularly abstemious. There is a proverb, 'The flesh of the turtle-dove is food for the wise' (*Caro turturis cibus est sapientium*). Perhaps the meaning of it is that the dove is food for reflection to the wise. Excepting the birds of a certain American hybrid species, called passenger pigeons, doves rarely build their nests in trees. They prefer to perch in rocks and high places or cots. But because they seek their nourishment on the ground they become symbols on the one hand of elevation and rest upon solid rock, yet, on the other, they seek their food in low places on the ground, indicative of humility. While most of the feathered tribes feed on insects and smaller species of animals, or even on young birds, and their eggs, pigeons live exclusively on herbs or grain and vegetable food of the fields. Again, pigeons are very fond of water. You will often notice them resting on the margins of running brooks or limpid pools.

"Occasionally a solitary pigeon may be seen sitting for hours on a projecting branch by the brink of a lake, as if it were in contemplation. No other bird shows a like habit of what seems like meditation, unless it be the owl or night hawk; but these latter simply sleep in the day and do their marauding at night.

"It is a rather remarkable fact that naturalists recognize this religious semblance in the dove. They actually distinguish among the large variety of the pigeon species what they call nuns and priests. Among the latter is a variety of pigeons which carries a tuft of inverted plumage, back of its head, like a collar or cap. These are called Capuchins."

"And which are the priests?"

"A species which is notable partly for the color of its plumage but more so perhaps, as I have already mentioned, for what is common to a great variety of the pigeon tribe, namely, the marked care which the father bird takes of the young, jointly with mother. Someone has said of the true priest that he must have the heart of a mother, for only so does he combine in his celibate state the double qualities of the parent who guides, provides and nourishes. This is in some sense true of the male pigeon. In the

spring, when the doves pair, both male and female work together at the nest; when the eggs are laid they both take turns at incubation; when the young are hatched both share the care of feeding the little ones, which, as I have already said, are blind for a time, and do not leave the nest until they are fully grown and covered with feathers."

"And what are the pigeons like which they call *nuns?*"

"They are like nuns in everything that is good—even in their dress. You see, you have grey nuns, and white nuns, like the Dominicans, and black nuns like the Benedictines, some brown, like Franciscans, and others black and white; some with veils over their heads and some with white collars and guimps and coiffes. Their habit is both fair and modest, that is to say, without gaudy colors or ornament, though nearly all are distinguished by their color blending with the sheen of opal which gives a regal impression. Another peculiarity of these pigeons is that they are mostly silent. There is a certain shyness and timidity in their movements, yet they become quite tame, as you notice. They suggest gentle reserve and simplicity. This does not prevent their being playful, or given to

sport and fun. Indeed they are fond of and attracted by music. There is a species called laughing pigeons, which originally came from the Barbary country, remarkable for the innocent frolic displayed, especially in their manner of calling each other. The Romans were in the habit of training these pigeons for pleasure, giving them the name *turtur risorius.*"

"What are the mourning doves, Father?" the Sister asked.

"They are common enough—a species of turtle-doves, that might be compared to the members of the penitential orders, or to religious devoted to reparation. The mourning dove is of the solitary species which, as already mentioned, when it loses its companion, separates from the flock and emits sounds as though it grieved over the death or absence of its mate, until it also dies."

"Perhaps David refers to this kind in the psalm *Exaudi,* when crying out: 'Who will give me wings like those of a dove and I will fly and be at rest.' "

"Very likely. That psalm (54) is prophetic. Commentators refer it to the abandonment of Our Lord by His own friends. It may have been occasioned by David describing his flight

into the wilderness from the anger of Saul or from the cruel ambition of Absalom. As the psalmist says:

Ecce elongavi fugiens et mansi in solitudine.

There he complains:

Quoniam si inimicus meus maledixisset mihi sustinuissem utique. Tu vero homo unanimis."

"Father, we don't all know Latin," blurted out one of the girls. "Say it in English."

In truth, Father Martin had quite forgotten that the children were still listening while some of the nuns at their recreation had gathered about the priest.

"Well," he said, smiling archly at the child, "I thought you all knew the language of our Holy Mother Church. Were not you baptized in Latin and confirmed in Latin? However, Sister here will tell you that speaking of the mourning dove the royal psalmist means himself, in the first place, as he retires into solitude to weep over the loss of his friend. At the same time the psalm is a prophecy foreshadowing the grief of Our Lord at the betrayal by His own apostle."

After the children had gradually returned to their play, or dispersed, the Mistress of the

school expressed regret that these facts about the birds were not more generally known.

"We don't read it in books, and yet it seems to me the children ought to know it, for the excellent lessons contained in the matter not only for the classroom but for individual deportment."

"Quite true. Our forefathers, particularly the Orientals, were fully alive to the value of nature studies not merely as scientific culture but as influencing the moral conduct of children and grown folk. The Arabs have a saying that it is better to instruct the young in seeing Allah at home than to make pilgrimages of devotion to Mecca or the tombs of the Prophet.

"The Sacred Scriptures in all parts of the Old Testament books contain lessons of nature study which lead the mind from the things of sense around it to the thought and realization of the presence of God. It is this that makes the Oriental so much more religious by nature than our Western peoples, with all our artificial aids to civilization. These hinder rather and hide the vision of the Eternal, which is constantly present to the Eastern mind and disposes it naturally to contemplative life.

"Much of this spirit has of course been assimilated by the Christian Fathers, those more especially who belong to the Hellenistic and Platonic school. They dwell on the characteristics, for example, of the dove, which make the latter not merely the symbol of religious and contemplative life but of the Church and especially of the Blessed Eucharist.

"Thus Tertullian speaks of the Church of Christ as the Home of the Dove (*Columbae domus*). Just as the dove makes its abode in the rocks and high places, so the Christian seeks the rock of Peter and the elevated sphere of the spiritual life that lifts him with wings of contemplation and prayer above the things of earth. *'Non quae super terram sed sursum corda.'*

"Where the dove does not dwell in the rocks it seeks shelter by the living waters, and again in cots or in belfries, as though it courted the limpid font of sacramental purification and sought shelter in the courts of the sanctuary and the tabernacle. Hence we find among the emblematic representations in the Catacombs and early Christian art generally the image of doves drinking from the Eucharistic fountain or from a chalice, and also in the form

of tabernacles that hold the Blessed Sacrament.

"St. Chrysostom has among his homilies one on the turtle-dove (*De Turture*) in which he pictures the dove as the chaste symbol of the Church. He or Ælianus makes a particular allusion to the habit of the wild pigeon which is said to cover her young with the petals of the field lily, thereby to protect them from the approach of certain carnivorous animals which are repelled by the aroma of the flower (gladiolus).

"That the dove also represents the gift of wisdom and in fact the Holy Spirit, is sufficiently clear from the Sacred Scriptures; for the Evangelists agree in the statement that the Holy Ghost descended in bodily shape as a dove upon Our Lord as He was being baptized by St. John in the Jordan. Hence we find Christian painters depict the great teachers like St. Gregory and the Angel of the Schools with a dove upon the shoulder, as though the Holy Spirit were whispering into their ears the secrets of that divine love which they so admirably interpret in their writings. Thus the bird has become the expression of every virtue that adorns religion and the soul of the lover of

Christ. The prophets Isaias, Jeremias, Ezechiel, Jonah and, most of all, the writer of Canticles, use the pigeon or turtle-dove as images not only of simplicity, fidelity, motherly tenderness for the young, mutual and chaste affection, silence, abstinence, humility, peace, prompt carrier-out of special missions (as in the case of Noe, who makes the dove the first carrier of a message of peace), of prayer and meditation, in short of every beautiful quality that distinguishes the religious, but also of outward decorum, swiftness and hidden strength which result from the practice of the former."

Here one of the nuns who had been late and was listening with absorbing interest to the words of the priest, as they freely flowed from his lips, while he himself had become somewhat enthusiastic about a theme on which he was evidently well informed, interrupted him.

"There is a passage, Father, in the psalm *Exurgat Deus* that refers to the dove, which has always puzzled me:

Si dormiatis inter medios cleros pennae columbae deargentatae et posteriora dorsi ejus in pallore auri.

The context does not seem to explain it. What can it mean?"

"Oh, yes, that is the 67th psalm which we read in the Thursday office of the Breviary. It is generally understood to refer to the Church as the dwelling place of the Real Presence:

Deus in loco sancto suo—Deus qui inhabitare facit unius moris in domo.

St. Jerome seems to have understood the passage as reference to the enemies of the Church in the midst of which the elect are safe above the obstacles of earth as a dove which passes in silvery flight on high into the mountains of God. I mentioned the fact that the name given to the turtle-dove is due to the murmuring sounds made by the bird, is illustrated also by the Greek term *trugon* (τρυγῶν), applied to the turtle-dove, which contains the sound *tru* or *tur* as it is found in the Greek verb *truzo* (τρύζω), which has the meaning of murmuring. But another name frequently given to the dove in Greek is *peristera* (περιστερά) which has the twofold derivation of *steros* (στερρῶς) strong and *petomai* (πέτομαι) meaning to fly, or according to another etymology from *erao* (ἐράω) to love. Thus the two elements of *strong winged* and *strongly affectionate* are indicated in the same word or sound. This characteristic is not un-

common in words both of the Greek and its sister language Latin, as it is also in Hebrew. The poets speak of the silvery flight of pigeons. The rabbins translate the passage this way:

> When ye lie among the sheepfolds the wings of the dove are covered with silver and her pinions with the shimmer of gold.

which has been rendered much clearer by translating it freely:

> When ye rest amid your allotted spoil (the spectacle is fair) like the silver wings of a dove whose back reflects the beauty of green shimmering gold.

In other words, the contemplation of the restfulness and peace of the chosen people of God after their victories over their enemies is like the picture of a dove as it moves in the sunlight, displaying its silvery and variegated plumage. The idea of the silvery sheen of a dove as it wings its flight under the bright sun, and the golden glint of its feathers as it rests in the light or moves about, is a favorite image with the classics and of course especially with the Orientals."

"Thank you, Father. I understand."

"The whole passage is an echo of the song of Deborah [Judg. v. 30] which describes the

women of Israel receiving bright-colored and rich garments of the booty taken from the defeated kings of the north. Vested or adorned in these garments they appear like the doves with outspread wings in the sunshine, their pinions now like silver and now like green shimmering gold."

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CHAPTER IV

A Jesuit Visitor from Abroad

The homely monotony of pastoral life at the Cathedral was agreeably broken in midweek after Easter by a visit of Father Tom Hugon, an old Jesuit friend of the Bishop's. He had just returned from Rome where his duties, as well as his tastes, had found useful employment in ransacking the Vatican Archives for certain original documents connected with the history of his Order.

"Where is Father Martin?" was one of his first questions that evening in the Bishop's room at the Cathedral where some of the Fathers were recalling old times at College. His surprise at hearing that the genial curate of former days had taken up his abode at St. Catherine's was turned into a proposal to pay a visit to the chaplain that evening.

They had a glorious time of it, which ended by Father Tom telling some of his experiences in Rome. To the remark that it must be rather

dry work examining MSS. and deciphering old historical documents which lacked humor, Father Hugon surprised the party by replying that on the contrary there was abundant matter for amusement to relieve the serious element in historical accounts, notably in the correspondence of old times. In the first place there are the so-called *novellisti* who, in lieu of newspapers, were in the habit of detailing the gossip of their day and place, to the edification and otherwise of their great patrons at Rome. Thus the accounts which were intended for the "blue" and "green" books of diplomatic circles are at odd times varied by a correspondence as wide-reaching as humanity itself. In truth, whilst the matter discussed is as a rule that which concerns the welfare of the Church militant, it also abounds in what is abnormal and ludicrous. Besides the official reporters of state proceedings there are those unofficial representatives of humanity who insist on having a word with St. Peter on his rock, and who have either singular things to say or pitch their voices on an abnormally high key to make themselves heard.

"I suppose," said Father Martin, "that apart from the accounts of diplomats and

bishops making their presentations and requests, the correspondence with the Popes mostly suggests reforms. I can imagine that this phase offers room for comical encounters."

"Oh, yes," was Father Hugon's reply, "there are plenty of monitors who give advice to the Popes in a less apostolic and dignified way than St. Bernard in his address to Pope Eugene. I recall several instances, particularly in the case of Innocent XI, the Odeschalchi, who was in fact much occupied with reforms of monastic living. The advice contained in numerous letters addressed to the Pontiff often abounds in ludicrous details of personal shortcomings on the part of abbots and bishops of whom the writers complain, with a suggestion that the Holy Father should forthwith depose them for the good of the Church."

Father Hugon noticed the young priest who as assistant had taken Father Martin's place at the Cathedral; and evidently fearing to scandalize him, felt that he ought to make some apology for the clerical weaknesses on which he was dilating.

"We all understand of course that the human element is not entirely absorbed by the super-

natural call to ecclesiastical offices. Holiness is not so essentially bound up in a cleric or in a religious with the talents he may have for efficient administration as to exclude human ambition. We know that the Apostles had their momentary desires for preferment and superiority. Again, while Matthew among the Apostles must have had as a banker eminent talent for looking after the economics of the Apostolic family, as also had Philip, from what we read in the Gospels we notice that Our Lord by entrusting the finances to Judas Iscariot elected to recognize his special genius for management. If the Apostle eventually abused the confidence reposed in him, it none the less shows that he might have become a great bishop like the others. Well, the Archives often enough show such weaknesses. At times the most refreshing instances are set forth by letters revealing in a rather comical way the ambition of individuals to get deaneries, canonries, abbacies, or even bishoprics. One would imagine that not only the interested candidates were wide awake early, every morning, to take a survey of the situation, but that their fathers and mothers, their brothers and their sisters, were taking in daily bulletins of news regarding the likely demise,

the expected death if not the unhappy convalescence, or the coveted departure at last to heaven or purgatory of bishop, canon, abbot. They kept account of all the enviable prebendaries and benefices open or contested betwixt the rising and the setting sun.

"In every case there is a governing attraction. Some, however, are independent enough to practise discernment; or they frankly explain their motives, often doing so with a cultivated taste. They don't pretend to any great virtue or merit. Their records don't warrant it. It is not the post, the place, the duty, the vocation that moves them; nor are they anxious for honors,—these humble souls. It is mostly the revenues they desire, so as to use them for the good of the Church and to pay their debts to their impoverished families. Sometimes there is a miscalculation, and the petition of the candidate or his supporter has arrived in Rome before the incumbent whom he wishes to replace is actually dead; and stationery and patronage have been expended in vain.

"Candidates for the episcopacy who write for themselves are not a rarity. A Briton resident in France represents how important it is that an Englishman who has made considerable

sacrifices for the cause of religion in his native land—or rather whose father had done so—should be appointed to the Bishopric of Toul. He wishes to have the Holy Father know that he will not curry favor with the French court by buying up the politicians who might present his case favorably, for he wants all the glory of his elevation to be credited to the Pontiff himself, exclusively.

"At another time a penurious cleric writes to the Secretary of State, apprising him that the abbacy of Santon is vacant; and though the applicant is not known to the authorities at Rome he avers that the abbey is due to him *de jure*. He urges haste in the appointment because others are pulling wires to obtain the position through their *fattori*."

Father Martin suggested that men had not much changed, for these things were going on in our own day.

"Were such applicants for ecclesiastical honors and emoluments ever successful?"

"Sometimes they undoubtedly obtained what they wanted, and the results were not always to the spiritual detriment of those who came under their charge. Often enough men of ambition are also men of ability. A cleric who seeks the

favor of those in actual power may, when he has obtained the coveted place, use his intellectual and moral gifts to improve actual conditions, and root out vices which an indulgent predecessor of humbler and weaker mettle had allowed to grow. Of course the purchasing of ecclesiastical honors or benefices, whether by money or flattery, is always more or less despicable. One should think that in most cases it injures the possessor of dignities not acquired by sheer merit. Others around him realize his want of true desert, and thus while they pay respect to his dignity as a matter of perfunctory and outward exhibition, they withhold that reverent affection and esteem which distinguishes the filial disciple from the servant or hireling. It goes without saying that the authorities at Rome or elsewhere in the aforementioned circumstances are not, and cannot always be aware of the influences at work below them to bring a less worthy candidate for promotion to the notice of the Pontiff, who finally ratifies the appointment recommended to him as most suitable."

"Have you paid your respects to the nuns as yet?" asked Father Martin, as the party was breaking up somewhat late that evening.

"No, I just came to see you, and shall be back tomorrow or at any rate shortly, for the Reverend Mother is an old friend of mine, and I have a message for her from Rome."

"Well, don't tell them what you have told us tonight about the wire-pulling records in the Vatican Archives. It might awaken their ambition to get another chaplain, and I rather like the job."

CHAPTER V

A Capuchin's View of Church Politics

The question of humor as a coefficient of religion came up again the next day when Father Bonaventure made his customary call on the chaplain, who told him of Father Hugon's experiences in ransacking the Vatican Archives for authentic documents relating to his Order.

"What a wonderful city Rome is," remarked the Capuchin, who had lived in Italy for some time. "To me it is one of the most striking proofs of the truth of the Catholic Church that the City of the Caesars should have remained through all the centuries the centre of attraction mainly as the residence of the successors of St. Peter."

"Macaulay seems to have had the right vision of it," said Father Martin, "when he asserted that it would outlast all the empires of the earth. Yet it seems to me that the modernizing influence is at work and may eventually disintegrate the bulwarks of tradition which have

been the strength of the Papacy. You remember the picture which Hugh Benson draws of the final collapse of Rome through the ascendancy of Masonry. I see a heavy onslaught gathering from the East. Moslem fanaticism has shown a wondrous vitality. It forebodes an aggressive movement which leaves Protestantism, with its thousand factional divisions and vague formularies of faith, wholly out of the count, unless it be that the ultimate rationalism to which it leads with great strides, will join forces with the Grand Orient as the one formidable adversary of the Church, the antichrist of the prophet."

"I don't know that that would alter the strength of Rome as the central directrix of the Church," Father Bonaventure thought. "Her weaknesses are the weaknesses of her Founder. Her ultimate triumph will be like the failure of Calvary, the exaltation of the Cross. It may mean persecution and humiliation; but that would be only the bursting of the seed in the ground, which must die ere it can bring forth blossom and fruit."

"What I fear as weakening the prestige of Rome as the centre of Catholic administration is the influence of money. After all, the factors

that govern are men, with their human passions. The descendant of Romulus is notorious for his sensitiveness on the subject of money. He has splendid gifts of mind and heart, but the age-old tradition of Pagan commercialism —'*omnia venalia Romae*'—has a strong hold on him. I don't mean of course that the Popes can easily be bought; though history shows that that is not an impossibility. We have had for centuries a magnificent line of Pontiffs whose nobility of character would dispel any such charge against them in modern times. But the entourage, the corps of officials and the hordes of dependents who live practically on the scanty alms doled out by the temporal administration of the Church, are often venal. It is a commonplace among ecclesiastics, though an artificial etiquette prevents the mentioning of bribes, especially among the higher officials, that you must purchase your way to audiences and favors which are supposed to be chiefly of a spiritual interest. Ecclesiastics who have obtained a knowledge of the means to enter a *carriera,* will succeed to high honors in the Church by keeping persistently in touch with the guardians of the Vatican gates, not excepting such as are supposed to be above the reach of money

considerations. The Pope who has to bestow honors or at least sanction them under his name and approval cannot possibly know the candidates heralded by subordinates as worthy. He must trust recommendations, and in this way the purchase of ecclesiastical honors becomes possible. The phrases with which the parchment documents introduce such promotions, as if the Holy Father were mindful of the great merits, etc., etc., of the 'decoratus,' mean nothing in some cases. The Pontiff sees the honored candidate as a rule only when he comes in his purple or carmine colors to render thanks, and then must take for granted that the kernel corresponds to the shell."

"You are rather hard on the dignitaries, and I fancy exaggerating a bit. But allowing that it is all true, there is nothing very alarming in it all. A state of things which of necessity combines human with spiritual issues will develop the politician in certain ambitious churchmen. We have these in the Church. The true churchmen predominate as a rule because God has to and will keep the hand of the rudder of St. Peter's bark, as He promised—'the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' So we meet the politicians, and most of all of course at the

state house or in the king's palace, that is, at Rome. I have observed that, in fact, they are not often bad managers. To succeed, however much they may promote their ambitions by money or flattery or kindred influences, they must possess some notable talents, and these they use chiefly for the good of the Church, since they have little use for them otherwise. I know no prominent clerics in administrative office today of whom you could say, 'He is a dummy,' though there have been such no doubt."

"Then you think, Father Bonaventure, that things in the temporal administration of the Church today are no worse than they have been."

"Decidedly. They are probably better. As for money influence in the Church of God—why it seems almost a part of the divine economy. Look at the High Priest's office in the Maccabean period, or at the Apostolic college in which Christ was head, and from which the Vicar to rule the Church was chosen. Who appointed Judas to carry the purse? And don't you think Our Lord knew long before the last betrayal that Iscariot was a thief? But He would not allow the Apostles to discuss or even suspect

the matter while they were living together under the same roof."

"Then we'd better drop it—heh?"

"But look at the other side, the immense benefit that derives from concentration of authority in religious matters, both of faith and discipline. We Catholics, despite our diversity of nationalities, educational differences, racial traditions and prejudices, not to speak of the surrounding influences called the progressive movement of modern civilization with its changing moral standards of right and virtue and beauty, present a solid phalanx of doctrine on all great moral issues, such as marriage, the basis of civil authority, parental rights and social jurisdiction and ethical property claims.

"Again, look at the armies of our benevolent associations, the religious orders of men and women, covering every domain and human need —in education, charity work, and social organization. When I see a nun in the street it gives me a thrill of gratitude to think I belong to the same faith, the same communion of saints, as we say. I am proud of their modesty, their valor and courage in embracing voluntary poverty, their loyalty in pledging absolute obedi-

ence to service in everything that is good. Their very habit is a decoration proclaiming silent heroism.

"We talk and write of the successes of nurses and teachers in the public hospitals and schools, and we publish their names and effigies with blare of trumpet to advertise their achievements. What are any of these to the million young women who, under the generous impulse of religious devotion, enter the service of the sick and poor and ignorant, without pay, without thanks of any kind, from early morn, till evening, without fail, devoting every hour of the day or, if need be, of the night to fit themselves for the duties of teaching and nursing, with no thought of marriage or promotion. Good Lord, how any man or woman, seeing or knowing these things, can fail to bow with reverence and be ready to kiss the ground on which these angels of mercy pass, is a mystery to me. I know no more beautiful sight than the face and figure of a nun on her errands of duty, and their outward dress and demeanor as a rule betokens a simplicity which befits the beauty of their inner habit. *'Le plus simple est aussi le beau.'* But we must remember also that the consistency and observance of their Rule and

Constitutions, which make this beauty real and harmonious as well as constant, are guaranteed by Rome."

"I don't object to your eulogy of our nuns," said Father Martin, "though I could wish that some of them were better organized or controlled."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that we have instances of so-called religious who are nothing more than troupes of Salvation Army lassies, not counting the old women who wear religious uniforms, yet without the zeal or discipline of General Booth's women. They get into an order somehow, and once professed, when they cannot be gotten out again without the fuss of a canonical process, become mere drones, making noise and doing as little as they can. Some of them, if they had to earn a living in the world, would land in the almshouse."

"What a critic you are! You don't mean to say that you have made observations as chaplain of St. Catherine's that would lead to such conclusions. If so, I should flatly contradict the inferences you draw, though I may speak only in general terms."

"Oh dear, no! This community is a troupe of angelical choirs against which I would not breathe a word of criticism. They put me to shame a dozen times a day, and since I've been here I have some hopes of saving my soul, simply by the example of devotion I see, not to talk of their prayers for their chaplain which are, I believe, a part of their regular program of devotions. But before I went to the Cathedral as curate I served for a short time as *locum tenens* at a railway mission church. On one side of the station there was an academy; at the other, at some distance, a sanitarium; both managed by different religious communities. I used to see the nuns from my window waiting for the train. There was the greatest difference in the world between the two, and I often felt like swearing when I saw those of the academy. They would go, or bring pupils to the train. There was chatting and laughing and hugging and good-bye kissing in view of the passengers, which made me ashamed of their wearing the religious garb."

"Oh, well, women are women; and the children expect affectionate demonstration from the nuns, especially when they are leaving the school."

"Women of the common sort, yes; they might be loud and demonstrative anywhere. Ladies are never so in public, and I take it that the reserve which belongs to a lady is an essential part of the religious life. Nuns are supposed to be unworldly. Their habit proclaims that profession, just as a soldier's uniform tells his allegiance to the army and its discipline. If the affection to be shown to the children has to take on the fashion of gushiness let them bottle it up in their convent halls, and not make a vulgar demonstration of it before a trainful of strangers—"

"Who would be as critical as yourself, Father Martin, I grant you," interrupted Father Bonaventure. "No doubt the order you refer to is a local institution not controlled by Rome nor with a Rule approved by the Holy See. That is to some extent a real danger in our religious development. We have numberless organizations of a purely diocesan character whose sole norm of government is the elected Superior. They have of course rules, but there is no visitation from a higher religious authority to note and correct abuses. The spirit of liberty, which often means laxity, easily creeps into a community that depends simply on the approval

of the Ordinary. The older orders, whose Constitutions have been tested, and whose houses are controlled from the original foundations, are much more secure against this habit of laxity. They find that it preserves the spirit of the institute to send their novices to European houses, and to call the local superiors with their provincials from time to time for consultation and a renewal of the ancient traditions. That is a safeguard, although it has its drawbacks, inasmuch as it perpetuates some anomalies that may hinder progressive development for a time."

"Do you approve of this control of American communities by a superior, say in Paris or Dublin or Namur or Rome?"

"In a measure, yes. It is like our Canon Law, which not only comes to us from Rome, but has to be safeguarded, supervised and interpreted by Rome. French or Italian superiors may not always sympathize with or even understand the demands of conditions in other countries which call for adjustment. But the spirit of tradition is safer than that of uncontrolled accommodation to what appeals to a local head or management. We hear a good deal about changed conditions to which we must

yield because the spirit of the times demands it. As a result the plea for arbitrary enactments and alterations gains strength. A new superior takes it into her head to make changes not only of policy in the management of particular institutes, but in the Rules, dress, customs of her foundation. Women often develop a passion for novelties; the *donna mobile* gets her way when a short-sighted superior comes accidentally into office or power. The result is of course a lessening of respect for traditions which are often a vital ingredient in the preservation of religious discipline."

"By the way, what is your theory of religious or priestly vocation. We had an argument here the other night which brought out quite divergent views. Do you think vocation is a divinely given impulse or rather simply election through a sense of aptitude?"

"I think it is both, or maybe either one or the other. Of course a religious vocation presumes the existence of certain qualities of mind and heart. One does not suppose a garrulous person to be called to the contemplative life, and vice versa."

"The Mistress of Novices here tells me," said

the chaplain, "that experience in her office for a number of years has taught her to distrust postulants with a recommendation as models of piety, even when the confessor adds his note of canonization. Among the children of their own training whom the nuns know, she prefers the vivacious or the hoydenish girl who gets herself into all sorts of scrapes, to the one who, because she is never found fault with, unconsciously develops a spirit of self-sufficiency and cannot easily be weaned from a quiet pride fatal to the spirit of docility and obedience in the religious life."

Father Bonaventure thought that a like experience was shared by others; though it cannot be accepted as a rule. The habit of silence and humility is often constitutional and as such befits a religious though it may not be a special mark of merit.

"By the way, I heard a curious story of a vocation from our gardener here the other day. He had it from one of the Sisters with whom he stands in high regard because he furnishes them the choicest of flowers for the sanctuary, not to speak of delicacies for the children's table. It appears that he has a commission to cultivate roses as a specialty all the year round.

In fact he has a wonderful rosary of every known variety including green and black roses which one rarely sees even in the famous conservatories. You will find roses on the altar almost on any feastday of the year. There is a young nun who has charge of this part of the sanctuary decoration, and who takes a particular pride in providing roses for the tabernacle, because she believes she owes her vocation to that flower. This is the story of it as the gardener heard it.

"Some ten or twelve years ago a gentleman and his wife called at the convent. When they were leaving, a sister just returning from the garden with a bunch of roses handed the flowers to the lady by way of compliment, as they were friends and benefactors of the community. On the way home the couple stopped at the house of an acquaintance, whose young daughter, a girl of fourteen, greatly admired the roses, and the lady gave them to her. At that time the Forty Hours' Devotion was going on at the parish church, and the child promptly took them to be placed on the altar of Exposition. Meeting one of the priests she proudly showed him the flowers. Being pre-occupied at the moment, in a perfunctory sort of way he told her to leave

them in the sacristy. There she saw the sexton, who took the flowers and laid them on a table. Indignant at the treatment of her beautiful offering, she took a glass vase which she spied near by, filled it with water, and placing the flowers in it, went straight out to the altar, up the steps, and put the roses right in front of the throne on which the Bessed Sacrament was exposed. Then realizing her audacity and wishing to make immediate amends she knelt down on the predella and said:

" 'Dear Lord, these beautiful roses are for You. I heard the lady who gave them to me say that they came from a convent, but I don't know where it is. I want to be a sister. Please take me to the nuns who gave You these roses.'

"Singularly enough, the preacher in the parish church, that same evening, telling of his attendance at the deathbed of a religious, described the edifying scene of the dying nun and her sisters around her, as she received our Lord in the Blessed Eucharist for her viaticum. The following day the child went to the priest, saying she wished to be a religious and asked him where the nun was of whom he spoke in the sermon. It happened to be the community from which the roses had come. The child, too young

to enter, received an introduction to the Mother Superior from the Father, and though she was at a school taught by nuns, she became a regular visitor to the convent of the roses until she was sixteen, when she entered. Ever since she has had a mysterious, one might think almost superstitious reverence for roses. They talk to her and she talks to them and makes them talk to our Lord. When anything difficult or painful occurs to her she takes a rose, kisses it and whispers: 'My love's thorns.' The gardener, who had the story from an older nun, seems deeply affected. He has great reverence for the little sister who comes for the roses, and being something of a dreamer and mystic, relishes his task of providing her with beautiful specimens for the altar."

CHAPTER VI

Fish and Tobacco

Patrick was the man of all work for the Sisters. He was a genius and fond of an occasional "drop of the creature." Among his other virtues was that he knew all about horses. He had been raised among them in Waterford.

Mr. Mulligan, as he called himself when speaking to the chaplain's housekeeper who was an Englishwoman and very tidy, was short but powerfully built. He was short in speech too, except when talking of horses, whose good points formed his supreme standard of excellence in the animal and moral world. Besides, he had a sort of overlordly way with him when talking, as if he were giving orders or settling accounts. It was the horsey habit. To suit these qualities he smoked a short pipe. This innocent piece of brier became the source of trouble in the religious community, for Patrick insisted on leaving it upon the sill of the kitchen window when he brought the daily consignment

of vegetables from the truck garden to the convent.

Sister Clare, who managed the domestic department of the religious household, was an indulgent nun. She liked Patrick because he generally minded his own business and, except for his pipe, did not interfere with the Sisters. But the cook, who was from Donegal, had her own opinion about Patrick. She liked neither his dudeen, nor the way he would sally into the pantry when the spirits were upon him, as if to see for himself that she did not neglect the vegetables.

"Them feedin's don't belong there," he would mumble to himself, "oats is oats and ye cut the sthraw when ye have no hay," which mysterious advice made the nun look cross at him. At other times he would be late with his load at the kitchen door. The fire had been waiting and the heat of it had got into the cook's temper.

"Yerrha," he would answer, when told that it was past the hour for bringing the vegetables for the dinner—"give the auld stove a bit more feed to quicken its pace. If the carrots be a little raw, they'll taste all the better." He was thinking of the mare in the stable.

But in time he got a wholesome respect if not fear for Sister Susanne, who made him feel it when he was derelict. Being somewhat in a hurry one morning, Patrick pushed his cart of vegetables with unwonted energy up to the kitchen gate, and put down his dudeen as usual. Somehow the pipe slipped over the sill of the open window into the room. Fortunately for Patrick there was no one in the kitchen at the time. As he promptly went in to rescue his smoking treasure and prevent a possible conflagration, he found to his dismay on the other side a large tin pan filled with water into which the pipe had disappeared. Groping for it with both hands, he discovered a large salmon, evidently intended for the day's consumption. It was Friday. After considerable fishing with hands not very immaculate, he rescued the instrument of comfort, now cold, and put it in his pocket. Wiping his hands on his trousers, he went to unload the truck. Of course there was nothing to be said about the matter, as an open confession would only have made things worse. He did not know how bad they were. The cook in the course of dinner preparation amid the varied fumes of the abstinence dishes had failed

to distinguish the odor of the peculiar seasoning of the salmon. Not so the Mother Abbess at dinner. She had a fine taste and began to suspect the nicotine sauce when she saw the controlled grimaces on the mild faces of some of her nuns. These facial contortions could not have been due to the reading in the refectory. Later on she went to the pantry.

"Did you have fish for your dinner, Sister dear?"

"No, Reverend Mother. There was just enough for the community table, so I took eggs instead."

"Well, there is some of the salmon left over, I think. Taste it!"

The Sister became alarmed. She went over to the sideboard where the dishes of the meal just ended had been deposited, and tasted the remnants of the salmon. In an instant the truth flashed upon her. The flavor of tobacco was unmistakable. She had noted what seemed like ashes in the basin, but as the fish had been carefully washed before, and the water drawn fresh for the cooking, she had paid no attention to the matter beyond removing what she thought fish scum from the surface. She also remembered

that Patrick had been unusually nervous in the morning, which made her wonder, for it was not his ordinary way.

There was a consultation after the cook had opened her mind to the Superior. Patrick was a good soul, but not quite reliable in certain respects. The Mother would speak to Father Chaplain who she thought could manage him better than anybody else.

When broaching the matter to Father Martin, she suggested that the tobacco habit was an objectionable feature in a man about the convent. It did not occur to her that the priest himself indulged, though quite moderately, in the weed. Indeed she was not sure that he smoked, for she never saw him doing so in the garden or about the grounds. But the housekeeper was familiar with the habits of Father Martin. She disapproved of tobacco on the general principle that it caused dirt and destroyed the immaculateness of the lace curtains which it was her pride to display in his sitting-room, but she felt that the priest regarded it more as a means of promoting congeniality in his visiting company than as an indulgence, for he rarely, if ever, smoked when alone. In the

course of the day she heard of the salmon seasoning, but it did not occur to her to connect it with Patrick, whose easy-going manners and escapades, though they were rare and happened only during the horse-racing season, she thoroughly resented, as he well knew.

Father Martin saw only the humor of the fish episode and laughed a most irreverent laugh when the Reverend Mother told of the wry faces of the Sisters. But her concern was not so much about the spoiled salmon that had been cooked in creosote with egg sauce for the nuns, as about the possibility of some of the boarders having partaken of the same dish. That would be not merely teaching the children bad taste, but it might ruin the reputation of the school. "Board and tuition" were supposed to be of the most select and approved character and under careful supervision. The pastry dishes at the table of the pupils were known to be the artistic production of a French chef in town, and indeed it was one of Patrick's regular tasks to call at the caterer's rooms for a portentous and mysteriously enveloped tureen, to be held carefully on the level, and in stormy or cold weather under a fur-sack, the contents of which more than once roused his Celtic curiosity by

the hot fragrance which issued from the slightly lifted lid, awakening longings together with suspicions of *poteen.* Of course the ladies knew nothing of what was going on in the thrifty mind of Patrick, who would make it a point to pass by the chaplain's door in hopes of meeting the housekeeper with an air of "Don't touch Mr. Mulligan, me lassie, for he holds secrets of which you are not to know anything."

Now it did happen that a bit of the obnoxious salmon was sent up to the young ladies' infirmary, and that two of them suffering from nervous anticipation of the coming examinations partook of the fish. Little as it was, it caused an immediate upturning of two noses—one snub and the other almost Roman. Being duly sensitive, as young collegians ought to be, the taste affected their tongues in more ways than one, and set them discussing the salmon first with one another and then with the girls who came to fulfil the Samaritan tasks of visiting the sick in the afternoon. "It had a horrid taste, like tobacco," was the petulant comment.

Thus far nobody had said or actually knew anything about the lapse of the pipe into the fish kettle. The cook suspected the truth and

had made her manifestation of conscience to the Mother, who had also spoken to the Sister Econome in charge of the domestic provisioning.

Father Martin fully realized the seriousness of the situation after the Superior had told him her thought and feeling. He saw that she could not well speak to Patrick on the mere ground of a harbored suspicion, shared and indeed aroused by the cook. She wanted to know what to do about the matter. In any case it was not likely to help matters much to force a confession from Patrick. It would moreover weaken the warrant for dismissing him. Besides, it was not desirable to give needless publicity to the fault, of which he no doubt repented so far as it was blameworthy.

"You believe that the pupils are likely to get hold of the matter and make difficulties or create gossip which would injure the reputation of the institute?" asked the chaplain.

"Two of the pupils in the infirmary appear to have expressed their discomfiture at the dinner sent up to them, and it is difficult to surmise what they may make of it. They are not to be relied upon for discretion; hence I could not speak to them as recognizing the complaint, which, if it were magnified by discussion, would

only injure the house the more. We have to be extremely careful in our management of some of the pupils, more on account of the parents than of the children. The Mistress General is continually beset by messages from the homes of certain overanxious mothers who seek to regulate the diet of their daughters by what their family physician and solicitous patrons prescribe. Only the reflection that a miserable fare and risk of their soul's salvation await some of the children if we were to dismiss them as troublesome, prevents our disregarding these directions, unless they positively interfere with the discipline of the house."

"Leave this case to me. The upper class has a Christian Doctrine lesson to-morrow. See that the two seniors in the infirmary attend, if possible. Meanwhile say nothing to anyone about the affair, and deal with Patrick as usual. Let him have his pipe, no matter where, unless he invades the cells of the nuns or the chapel with its perfumes."

The Reverend Mother seemed relieved, though puzzled and a bit doubtful of what course the chaplain, who seemed to treat the incident as quite a joke, might eventually say or do in the Senior Apologetics Class.

Meanwhile Father Martin went to his room and lit a cigar. Then he walked over to the academy, past the children's infirmary, puffing away like a steam engine. The nuns who met him were astonished but said nothing, since silence prevailed while the classes were going on in the rooms below. Finally the chaplain stopped at the office of the Reverend Mother and knocked. In answer to her subdued "Come in" he opened the door and blew out a great cloud of tobacco smoke, almost paralyzing the Superior, who was closeted with the Prefect of Studies.

"Oh, Father!" was the simultaneous exclamation and a look of horror on the part of the two nuns.

"Why, don't you like the tobacco smoke? This is quite a good cigar."

"Yes, but—"

"I see you don't allow smoking in these precincts. There is no sign up to warn the intruder, and I have not been in the habit of doing it; but I was in a hurry and thoughtless. I quite understand. These are exclusively ladies' coupés, and smoking is not allowed outside the smoking car. Let me ask, however, could you transfer to a later hour in the after-

noon the Catechetics lecture? I am engaged with a visitor who comes from the Bishop on urgent business."

"Certainly, Father. Any hour that is convenient to you, will suit us and the children. If you leave the directions with the Mistress General, the schedule of hours will be arranged as you wish."

Now the urgent business on which Father Martin was bent was having a talk with one of the Fathers from the Cathedral, whom he had called over for the purpose of finding a pretext to defer the Christian Doctrine class to a convenient hour at which the two seniors of the infirmary could be present, for he had been told that they had to rest till then. The visit had also supplied him with the opportunity of carrying the tobacco fumes into the preserves of the Sisters, an occasion which he utilized to bamboozle the young ladies, as we shall presently see.

The occasional lectures in Christian Doctrine which the chaplain of the Convent gave to the senior class were meant to supplement the regular instructions in the Catechism of Perseverance and Apologetics taught by one of the re-

ligious. Whilst he followed a systematic course, chiefly with a view to explain the ceremonial of the Church, he found frequent opportunity of entering upon historical and controversial subjects which threw light upon, or lent themselves, to the defence of Catholic doctrine and practice. He had been dwelling on the symbolism of the Holy Eucharist.

On the afternoon after the fish incident he seemed to digress somewhat from the routine by proposing to speak of the symbolism of the incensing rite connected with the Mass and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. After he had explained the significance of the burning incense at the Introit, Gospel, Offertory of the morning sacrifice, and again at the Benedictus, Magnificat of the Canonical Hours and at Exposition of the evening services as typical of prayer enkindled by the divine love in the heart of the worshipper, and ascending in union with the priest's prayer in the name of Christ as a sweet odor pleasing to God, he spoke of the historical development of the rite, which had a profane as well as a sacred source.

The use of incense was originally meant not merely to create pleasing perfumes, and to act as a sanitary antidote to malignant or unpleas-

ant influences of the atmosphere, but it had the distinct purpose of counteracting the lassitude caused by the great heat in tropical countries. It thus served as an invigorating, recruiting element among the Egyptians and other southern nations, and apart from its sacred use had a purpose similar to that of tobacco in our own day.

Here he unexpectedly introduced the subject of smoking, saying that it was no doubt an act pleasing to God, though not actually an act of worship.

"You smile at the suggestion that a cigar may become the expression of a virtuous act?" he said, by way of interpreting their mounting merriment at his remark. "But I am quite in earnest. A good Havana such as your fathers and brothers are likely to smoke promotes cheerfulness; and where it does not actually aid in conversation it still fosters the sense of companionship. The peace pipe is to the Indian what love tokens are among civilized folk. No doubt the cigar or pipe has its place. It would be quite out of order among young ladies and their religious teachers. We men sometimes forget this in our devotion to the weed. I am actually making a humble confession when I tell

you that I shocked Reverend Mother within the last few days by thoughtlessly desecrating your sacred preserves with the fumes of tobacco. She did not actually rebuke me, as she might have done were she less gentle, but perhaps some of you had your dinner spoiled by the aroma which, though soothing and agreeable to men habituated to smoking, has a pungent effect on delicate nerves and is apt to offend, not only moths, but young ladies living in a purified and religious atmosphere. If you have noticed the obnoxious aroma of nicotine in any part of these sacred halls, the discredit is mine and I solemnly apologize to the young ladies and their religious tutors."

The words had the desired effect. Although the two nerve invalids insisted that they tasted the tobacco everybody was convinced that it was their imagination which tasted it. The Reverend Mother who had been in the classroom with some of the teachers during the Father's Conference on Christian Doctrine was satisfied and pleased.

The chaplain meant to study up the benefits, spiritual and temporal, of tobacco, with a view to allaying the prejudices against the weed which were being fostered on the subject by

some of the temperance ladies who were in politics, and who began their campaigning as an educational experiment with some of the nuns. The incident of the salmon, if it got out, would be a deadly weapon in their hands. Besides, Father Martin, who liked Patrick, meant to restore the primordial dignity and composure of that functionary of the stable, though he meant to keep an eye on him and his pipe.

When Father Martin next called on the Bishop, as he deemed it his duty from time to time to pay his respects to his old friend and protector, the prelate greeted him with:

"I hear the chaplain of St. Catherine's is teaching the nuns smoking for a diversion. I strenuously object to the novelty, whatever they may do in Spain or South America."

"Not as bad as all that," said the priest, "though I have in preparation a course of Conferences on the graces and symbolic significance of tobacco incense, in order to dissipate certain prejudices against the weed, and, I may add, against the chaplain fostered by the white ribbon band of the *Mères Chrétiennes,* since they have come, partly, under my direction."

"Are they advocating the elimination of the weed?"

"Not yet, but there are signs of a tendency or movement in that direction."

"Well, let it alone. If I had to give the chaplains of nuns in my diocese special rules of conduct I should sum them up in three prescriptions:

Be punctual to the minute;
Be deaf on one ear;
Don't give advice unless you are asked for it by the Mother Superior.

"Which ear is to be the deaf one?"

"The one to which complaints are being made against the Mother Abbess or any of her Sisters."

"Suppose the complaint were made against the Bishop?"

"Why listen, sympathetically, as you would or should if the grumbling were directed against the chaplain. If the complaint be fair or justifiable, even though proffered in a querulous manner, be sure to have it properly corrected, and unless it is purely personal, throw the weight of your influence on the side of the community."

Father Martin smiled compliance, for he saw

the wisdom of the Bishop's advice. He had several times been tempted to make suggestions of improvements in economical arrangements that had struck him as deficient, and once or twice a lay Sister had come to him to pour out confidences under the plea of seeking advice. But he instinctively recognized the elements of discontent in the approach, and knew enough of human nature to realize the danger of fostering it in a subordinate incapable of reasoning in matters of religious discipline which demands the spirit of self-sacrifice.

Once he had shown his dissatisfaction with the Sister in charge of the sacristy. It was after he had been at St. Bridget's and seen the arrangements for the altar boys and the appointments of the sanctuary there. The convent was not poor, but whosoever was responsible for the furnishings of the altar service seemed to deem it necessary to exercise an economy which jarred on Father Martin's sense of reverence. There were two censers for Benediction; one of solid silver and apparently a votive gift of specially artistic design; the other a brass device of the common type, the plating of which had been long worn off, giving it a dark dirty yellowish color.

"Don't use that censer," said Father Martin one evening on entering the sacristy as he saw the little altar boy preparing it for the Benediction.

The child looked up puzzled to the Sister, who said:

"Why, Father, we use the other precious one only for great feasts."

"What do you mean—great feasts? Isn't God big enough to be counted great? That shabby piece of brass should not be seen in any but the poorest sanctuary. You would use the silver censer for the Bishop if he chanced to come. If that is what you mean by great feasts, change your viewpoint. Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament is always bigger, as you might know."

The rebuke which was spoken more mildly than it might sound in an angry mouth—and Father Martin was too much of a humorist to be ever angry—had its effect. Shoddy things in vestments and otherwise disappeared from the sacristy, and the Superior who heard of the matter evidently seconded the chaplain's view, though she had previously failed to notice the economies of the nun.

As Father Martin, who related the passage

to Father Bonaventure later on, said, he had no scruple in correcting that sort of thing for the sake of the altar boys, as well as on general principles of becoming respect for the service of God. Religious mean no irreverence, but they frequently get into a perfunctory way of doing things because they become accustomed to routine and where the Superior happens to be silent they get into habits consecrated by tolerance and tradition.

In other respects the Father wisely minded his own business, and thereby preserved not only peace of mind but the respect of the nuns and their entourage.

CHAPTER VII

In Clouds of Smoke

In the afternoon Father O'Keefe from the Cathedral came with a message for Father Martin. He always stayed, for he enjoyed not only the congenial society of the Chaplain of St. Catherine's but also the delicious brand of his cigars. Father Martin was a moderate smoker yet he knew a good cigar and denounced as a crime the mere habit of inhaling anything that was likely to poison the blood as well as the atmosphere around him. He said as he handed the box to his guest:

"This will improve your virtue."

"It is rather a weakness with me," replied the other. "I don't see how people could have lived without the use of a pipe or a cigar before the weed was brought to us from the Indians."

"Exactly," rejoined the chaplain. "I told the nuns the other day that the smoke of a fine cigar was like incense, a symbol of fellowship among men of good will. I hold it to be a positive virtue."

"I should hardly recognize it as a virtue," said Father O'Keefe, "although I readily admit that smoking has its advantages. It probably kills some noxious microbes where they cannot be reached quite so conveniently in any other way. Moreover, it serves as a substitute for recreation of a more absorbing nature to which one might be inclined. Thus I should prefer to see our sexton smoke, for I could hardly imagine him to be contented without some diversion when he is not working; during week days he sits often in the churchyard without company to suit his disposition, and he cannot go elsewhere for it as he might be wanted any moment in the sacristy. His pipe keeps him steady and occupied; it is his recreation in the midst of work, and it beguiles his leisure hours with the the pretence of something to do. The 'dudeen' satisfies the craving for companionship, whether he is in the garden or in the cellar."

"Quite so," replied Father Martin with some animation, "but there is, I hold, a far-reaching virtue in the use of tobacco for most other people as well. I have thought much over the subject within the past week. During the years which I spent at the seminary before ordination I never smoked. The students were not,

of course, permitted to do so; but they did. During my term of prefectship in theology it frequently became the topic of discussion. At one of the meetings of the faculty to which I was called, somebody asked whether it would not be wiser to abolish the prohibition and to permit a practice the harmlessness of which, to say the least, was attested by the habit of the professors themselves, some of whom were inveterate smokers and seemed none the worse for it. But the rector, who was quite fond himself of a good cigar, and Dr. Brown, who kept the snuff-box always on his desk during class hours, resolutely opposed, I was told later, any movement that tended to weaken the rigor of the rule on this subject. The reasons were, I think, good. They applied, however, only to seminarians under discipline; and when, after the members of the faculty had been asked to express their opinion on the subject, the Superior explained his own views, they all felt perfectly convinced that he was right. But I am told that the discussion brought out a great variety of the virtues of the weed. I have begun actually to make a collection of quotations from writers in prose and verse who set forth the sublime functions of tobacco. They herald Sir

Walter Raleigh among others as the greatest moral reformer of the age for what he had done to make the plant known throughout the world."

"Men of books," said Father O'Keefe, "such as the poets and writers, have naturally been fond of their pipe; and one might suppose that they readily brought their artful muse to singing the praise of that favorite instrument of Pan. Still this would hardly prove its use to be an altogether moral habit. Do you know what reason the rector of the seminary had for prohibiting the use of tobacco amongst seminarians, despite the fact that he recognized its beneficent influence, as you say?"

"Well, as far as I could learn, the argument against the use of tobacco among the students of the seminary was twofold. First, that such reasons as might be advanced for encouraging or at least tolerating the practice of smoking in a community of men, had no existence for the young seminarian; secondly, since the seminary is a school where the student is to acquire the habit of self-discipline, it would be unwise to encourage a luxury excusable enough under other circumstances, but which could only weaken the spirit of self-denial so essential to the true priest. The missionary might have a

hundred reasons for resorting to tobacco as prophylactic when he visits the sick or spends hours in the confessional, or even merely as *negotium in otiis* and *otium in negotiis.* For the student in the seminary there exist no such reasons. His day is portioned out between work and the conventional recreations in which his fellows naturally take part. His youth precludes the assumption of an acquired habit which it might cost an older man great sacrifice to give up; his methods of life are much more wisely disposed than those of the laborer, the soldier, or the professional man who feels compelled to seek relief from the isolation or strenuousness of their position in the companionship of a pipe; and then it cannot be supposed that a seminarist would be reasonably reluctant to practise a quality of self-restraint which constitutes the essential discipline that fits him for his future state of life. At a later time during his service in the priesthood he may find that the hardships of his missionary duties or the solitude and isolation of his position suggest a recourse to the relaxation of the pipe, the cigar, or the snuff-box; or else the circumstances of sociable intercourse with those who seek relief from the strain of pastoral care in this sort of

diversion, may make the use of tobacco not only a lawful indulgence but a means of promoting the amenities of hospitality. But the ecclesiastic, ordinarily, is not forced to have recourse to this practice as a necessary recreation, at least not during his term of studies in the seminary. It is questionable, moreover, whether the use of tobacco during the early years of seminary confinement, when the physical man is still in the process of development, does not stunt to some extent the growth of his faculties and injure his health. These were the main considerations, apart from those of cleanliness and disciplinary observance, which induced the rector to maintain vigorously the rule forbidding smoking during the seminary course. The fact that similar rules are maintained in military academies and collegiate schools, even in countries where smoking is universal among men, confirmed him in this view, and most men will probably agree with it when there is question of ecclesiastical education."

"Very true. Self-discipline and the desirableness of cultivating a habit of cleanliness which is so necessary a virtue in the life of a young cleric, would, of itself, furnish good grounds for banishing the practice of smoking

from the students' hall. I confess that, although I found—oh, here comes Padre Isidore," said Father O'Keefe, interrupting himself, as he looked out of the window and pointed toward the dapper figure in black which was moving across the street.

Father Isidore was the Guardian of the Franciscan Church and Community in the city. A German by birth, he had seen a good deal of the outside world since his entrance into the Order. Though quite a different type of man from Friar Bonaventure, the Capuchin, the two were good friends and of nearly the same intellectual tastes, which had tended to bring them into relation with Father Martin while at the Cathedral, where the Friars were often invited to help out in preaching or in the confessional. Now that Father Martin had come to St. Catherine's, they made it a point to keep up the old comradeship.

"Walk in, Father Isidore," said Father Martin as he drew forth a seat for the newcomer. "Walk in, we are just having a dissertation on the moral influence of tobacco, and shall want your opinion as an expert."

"I am your man," puffed the Padre, wiping

the perspiration from his rosy face, his dark eyes giving promise of fresh animation to our discussion. "But first let me see what sort of fuel you have on hand to kindle the fire of critical judgment on so important a topic. I know Father Martin usually keeps the best for his guests; nevertheless since he gave up the weed I distrust his faculty of discerning between a real Havana-filled and—well, the fine brown frock with a heart unworthy of St. Francis under its cover. However, if I am not greatly off the scent there is good smoke in the air. Ah, this looks like a choice importation over the Canadian frontier, none the worse for the journey.

"Oh, 'tis well enough
A whiff or a puff
From the heart of a pipe to get;
And a delicate youth
With a poor throat or tooth
May toy with a cigarette;
But a man, when the time
Of the glorious prime
Dawns forth like the morning star,
Wants the dark brown bloom
And the sweet perfume
That go with a good cigar."

"Good! Who is the poet? I know Byron

has some lines in praise of the weed, but I forget them. They are in one of the cantos of *The Island,* and begin

> "Sublime tobacco! which from east to west
> Cheers the tar's labor or the Turkman's rest."

"Father O'Keefe ought to know Byron. He has a most gorgeous edition of the poet; but I doubt if he ever opened the volume."

"Oh, yes," remonstrated the Father in a mild way. "I opened it, but closed it too soon to remember very much. I certainly never read *The Island.* Something, however, has stuck to my memory in *Sam Slick,* which I enjoyed during a rather dull railway trip lately. Sam believed that the moment a man takes to a pipe, he becomes a philosopher. It's the poor man's friend; it calms the mind, soothes the temper, makes a man patient under difficulties. It has made more good men, good husbands, kind masters, indulgent fathers, than any other blessed thing on this universal earth."

"He is not far from the truth," broke in Father Isidore. "When I was a young man with our Fathers, who were in charge of Mexican Missions during the yellow-fever epidemic, a plug of tobacco was thought more essential on

a journey than money or a substantial meal, for it served not only as a prophylactic against disease, but stilled hunger and thirst; and the Indians helped us on our way with more alacrity when we had a 'chew' to offer them than might have been the case otherwise. Padre Guardiano used to say to me, 'Isidore, you will be awfully fat if you eat so much, and you *will* eat if you stay at home, so now go, and take an empty bag with you for alms, as did our holy Father St. Francis, lest you fill your belly and neglect the missions.' And I used to think of old Rowlands and would sing myself into a cheerful mood by the reflection that

> "Much victuals serves for gluttony
> To fatten men like swine;
> But he's a frugal man indeed
> That with a leaf can dine,
> And needs no napkin for his hands,
> His fingers' ends to wipe,
> But keeps his kitchen in a box,
> And hot roast in his pipe."

"Your mentioning swine in connection with tobacco reminds me of a story apropos of the subject," said Father O'Keefe. "A preacher who had attended a Methodist convention where

smoking had been unanimously voted down as ungodly and unbecoming a minister of the Gospel, met another minister who seemed to enjoy his smoke: 'How is it possible you smoke tobacco, Brother? Pray, give up the unseemly practice. It is alike unclerical and uncleanly; even a pig would not smoke so vile a weed.' The minister of the pipe delivered a mild outpouring of tobacco-fumes and then as mildly said: 'I suppose, Brother, you don't smoke?' 'No, indeed!' exclaimed his friend with virtuous horror. Another puff or two, and then the smoking preacher, who preferred apparently the Socratic mode of argument, rejoined: 'Then, dear Brother, which is more like the pig—you or I?' "

They all laughed heartily.

"Well," said the chaplain, "I do believe there is something in tobacco that makes it a real blessing to the priest or the missionary, quite apart from the personal enjoyment that one derives from the puffing. Not long ago I heard a story which seems odd enough, but which I have no doubt is true. It was related to me by one of the professors of the seminary, and is not unlike his own methods; for he has the reputa-

tion of being quite a Jesuit in the way of turning occasions into resources. He was delayed one November evening at a railway station. There was another passenger similarly detained, and both men were pacing the platform to keep off the chill of the autumn night, for the train was not expected to arrive for at least three-quarters of an hour. Naturally the priest was inclined to open conversation with his solitary companion, who, in English fashion, had taken a small pipe from a side pocket and begun to smoke.

"As the two men for a moment faced each other in passing, the priest noticed in the expression of the stranger a marked attitude of mingled aversion and impatience; and this naturally chilled into silence the salutation which was on the professor's lips. He went on, however, while the mood of his companion gave him thought. He judged—and as the event proved, rightly—that the sudden frown had been provoked by the evidence of the Roman collar, and that the man, though evidently a gentleman, was one of those prejudiced critics of the priesthood of whom the narrow world is full. In any case the priest would make trial if it were so, and, if need be, stand a rebuff in the attempt to en-

gage the stranger in conversation with the view of softening his humor.

"The two had passed each other several times, when suddenly the priest stood still in front of the man, and said: 'Excuse me, sir, I perceive from the smoke of your pipe that you use excellent tobacco; would you kindly give me a pinch of it? I have a bad cold in the head and a bit of nicotian dust would relieve the dulness caused by the clogging of the nasal passage.' The compliment paid to the choice of his weed probably took the man by surprise, but it evidently pleased him. 'Oh, certainly,' he replied, as he pulled out his pouch, and shook some of the tobacco into the palm of the priest's hand. The latter thanked him, spoke of the blessings of a pipe on an evening like this, and kept on talking, whilst with his finger he ground the broken leaf into powder. The stranger answered in monotone; but gradually, as the glow of his pipe, increased by the warmth of the professor's appreciation, caused the chill to melt away, the two began to move side by side, as was natural. 'I am not often on a journey without a cigar,' pursued the priest, 'for tobacco is a wonderful panacea amid the accidents of life. I remember how as a student I was horrified, not to say dis-

gusted, when I perceived for the first time that one of my professors, an extraordinary man in many ways, was addicted to the use of chewing tobacco.' 'That is, I think, a rather repulsive manner of using the weed,' rejoined the Englishman, 'at least in good society.'—'Well, in the case of the preceptor to whom I allude, I came in time to look upon his habit with indulgence, and even with positive reverence!' 'How?'—'Why, I learnt that he was a Southern gentleman whose peculiar circumstances had made it quasi-necessary to acquire the habit of chewing tobacco, and once he had attained that habit, there seemed to him nothing repulsive in it, and so he kept it up.'—'I can hardly conceive,' replied the Englishman, 'what necessity would compel a man—I mean a gentleman—to acquire such a habit. As a precaution against disease germs one might use chewing tobacco now and then, but physicians have other drugs probably less offensive to good taste which serve that purpose; and as far as I know they do not use chewing tobacco except in rare cases, just as they use whiskey against the effects of poison-bites, when there are no other remedies at hand. I speak from my own experience as a surgeon, though I am not sufficiently familiar

with American customs to know what might be done in the States.' 'I am sure,' answered the priest, 'you are quite right in what you say. Nevertheless, there were good reasons in the present instance. The gentleman of whom I speak had been sent abroad to study. After having taken his degree as Doctor in Philosophy and Theology he returned to his Southern home. It was during war-time. A frightful epidemic was at the time decimating the army and the population, and the young man, being a priest, although by reason of his talents destined for a literary career, was at once detailed to do duty as chaplain in the camps. This meant constant attendance on the fever-stricken. I do not know whether you are familiar with the discipline of the Catholic Church, which obliges any priest, regardless of risk or comfort, to assist the sick and dying of his faith, or anyone who calls on him. A Catholic hopes for forgiveness of the wrong he may have done in life, under condition that he proves the sincerity of his sorrow by an explicit avowal of his sins, with an equally explicit promise and resolve to repair the wrong he may have done, if perchance he should recover. This is what we call Confession. It implies, of course, that the priest

should get into the inner life, as far as possible, of the dying patient. You can readily imagine what the circumstances of a hospital or a tent where numbers are closely huddled together require in cases like this, especially when you remember that the confession of each is to be guarded as a most solemn secret, and that therefore the priest is bound to do all in his power to get into such communication with the plague-stricken as will safeguard their reputation.'

"'Pardon me,' said the stranger, 'do you mean to say that a priest is bound to these offices under all circumstances?'

"'Yes, under all, except necessity.'

"'And what would be the penalty if he neglected to comply with the obligation?'

"'He would be suspended, and apart from losing his official standing in the Church, would be degraded and regarded as a moral leper, by all who knew of his conduct.'

"'You surprise me; I had a different idea of the scope and meaning of what you call *confession.* Would a priest ever forgive or grant indulgence to a person without requiring the conditions of repentance and without insisting on the resolve to sin no more?'

"'If he did so, the absolution would be in-

valid and hence perfectly useless, nay, it would be deemed a mockery.'

"'And do Catholics who confess know this?'

"'Assuredly, every Catholic child sufficiently intelligent will tell you so.'

"'Ah, when you say *sufficiently intelligent*, you make an important distinction. I fancy a very large number of your Catholic people are not sufficiently intelligent.'

"'That is, of course, a matter about which we must each have our own opinion. The really important point remains whether they are taught this, and this only, by Catholic doctrine and authority. When we know that priests teach the people from childhood up, we might ask: Is it a matter which is so difficult to understand that persons should justly assume it to be beyond the most limited intelligence? I think you could easily get the answer to both these queries, if you were to take up the Penny Catechism which our little children read in Catholic schools. It may contain many things incomprehensible to a mind not so simple as that of the child, but the catechism is quite clear on this particular point.'

"'What you say is very interesting, if, as I have no doubt, it be true. Now this young

priest, of whom you spoke, found it necessary, I presume, to chew tobacco in order to prevent his inhaling the pest germs?'

"'Yes, for drugs were not so easily to be had when he needed them; but a negro or a soldier could, as a rule, furnish a bit of tobacco. Besides, the priest had often to go a considerable distance to celebrate Mass, that is, to perform certain rites of the Church in order that he might give Communion to the dying, which Catholics hold equally essential. These rites have to be performed by a priest fasting, and you will readily understand that the exhaustion incident to travel from place to place, with mostly very wretched accommodation and an empty stomach, increases the dangers of infection; this is lessened by some prophylactic, such as tobacco in the mouth, which prevents the germs in the air from passing into the stomach and intestines.'

"'Very true.'

"To make the story short, for I shall have to go," said Father O'Keefe, "the two kept up a conversation on religion which totally disarmed the prejudiced stranger, who cordially thanked the priest for the information he had obtained—and all that for giving him a pinch of snuff."

"Quite interesting and instructive, Father. I am sorry you have to go, but we shall see you here again Sunday?"

"Certainly, if possible. Au revoir, gentlemen."

CHAPTER VIII

The Blessed Nicotina and "Old Nick O'Teene"

"Father Isidore, who is a fine raconteur, told us some good stories about tobacco. He is an inveterate smoker, and would, I believe, do without three meals in succession rather than miss his cigar." This was to Father Bonaventure, who always dropped in on Father Martin after the weekly shrivings of the nuns.

"Not at all—they exaggerate. I know him well. He smokes, of course, being an old missioner and German. But he is a philosopher and uses tobacco as he uses the Gospel, or rather as a sort of prelude in leading up to it. He never goes without a cigar-case. He calls it his 'magic-box' for making conversation with strangers."

"That is rather singular. Then he doesn't smoke at home?"

"I should not say that. I believe he looks upon a cigar or a snuff-box as the ready means of making himself comfortable as well as enter-

taining friends; and in this he seems to be right. A smoke is for him a real relaxation. But it also talks. Indeed the proper use of a cigar often disarms prejudice in a stranger or makes him companionable. Take the instance of a man who is on a journey, say in a railway coach. His travelling company may be either reserved, or silent for lack of a common topic of conversation, or he may be naturally distrustful of strangers whom he does not know. But let him light a cigar and ask the other to join him, and the spell is broken. Disposition and character show themselves at once to a keen-eyed observer in the ways in which a man handles a cigar, or even in the manner of his refusing to smoke, that is in the reasons he may give for abstaining from smoking. I know of no other means by which the genuine nature of a man is called to the surface so readily as by a cigar; unless it be sea-sickness, which is the best leveller of social distinctions and makes the traveller sympathetic, thus inducing him to expose his true inner self.

"Think of two men living under the same roof, meeting each other frequently and therefore liable to have their little 'spats' and differences in argument. It happens that they fall

out, call each other fools, and by the next morning realize that they were both correct in their estimates, and that they had only mistaken the persons in the heat of contention. Yet neither of them has the courage to humble himself and acknowledge the discovery or make an apology. What they lack is a proper method of approach. Each, although knowing himself in the wrong, is too sensitive to make a formal overture for reconciliation, fearing a possible rebuff, and naturally unwilling to be snubbed. Or even granted that there be no repugnance on one side or the other to acknowledge the error, yet apologies are at times unwise, especially when you deal with a narrow-minded man who is disposed to mistake another's humility for his own superiority, thus being apt to widen the breach by an air of condescension with which he accepts the acknowledgment of a mistake instead of laughing it away. In both these cases, let the two men have a couple of cigars between them, or let one offer the other a light or a pinch of snuff, and the difference between them vanishes without words like smoke."

"Yes, and as for the pinch of snuff," continued Father Bonaventure, "I can vouch for its virtue in another way. We had a Father who

taught us moral theology in the novitiate; an Italian, with a mind sharp and pointed as a Sicilian stiletto, yet at the same time he was a man scrupulously careful of his words. Well, it often happened during the discussion of cases of conscience in what he called our *cerchiettino* —a little circle composed of the cleverest students chosen from the higher class of theology, and attended also by some of the Fathers—that rather puzzling questions were hurled at him, representing opposite opinions. In these cases he would rarely, despite his naturally quick and decisive manner, answer at once. I see him before me now, as some one throws an objection at a statement supported by him. He would look at the questioner; then look down before him, gather his habit over his knees, take a large red bandanna from his wide sleeve, blow his nose, wipe his mustache and long beard, and then stop as if to collect his thoughts. After a little he would take out his snuff-box, which was large enough to accommodate the contents of a half-pound jar, tap it two or three times, slowly take a pinch between his fingers, and after holding it there for a half-minute deliberately move it to his nose; then having expressed his satisfaction with the flavor by a prolonged sniff,

he would close the box with a bang and deliver his well-considered and well-worded distinction. It used to amuse us greatly to see him look up triumphantly after all these maneuvers, as if to say, 'Jupiter took snuff at the contempt and settled him.' And of a truth the secret of his profound and analytical thinking seemed to be all in that snuff-box. Its use gave him time to reflect as no other contrivance could have done, without creating a sense of awkward or unnatural suspense which might have left the false impression upon the younger students that the hesitation in a man usually so ready was the result of uncertain knowledge."

"Curious, but, I am sure, quite true; and I fancy that this service of the snuff-box as an expedient to give time for formulating an opinion is responsible for the partiality which professors and judges on the Bench show for that form of tobacco; it is a capital powder which needs not to be kept dry, makes no smoke, and does not even have to be fired in order to transmit the shot."

"For my part, though not a smoker, I have noticed," said Father Bonaventure, "that the cigar offers a convenient form for keeping in good humor our man who drives me to the hos-

pital. He has often to take me out of his way to visit old Harriet, who holds me listening to her imaginary stories of pain and sleepless nights whilst Jerry is waiting, and occasionally he gets fidgety for fear of being behind time at the chapel, for he has a desperate respect for the Mother Abbess, who pretends to scold him when late, though she knows that it is not his fault. But when he has lit his pipe he waits composedly and forgets all worry."

"Indeed it is marvellous how a cigar sometimes helps you out when a man does you a service which has perhaps no precise money value, yet which you feel it necessary to recognize in some way. It is a 'tip' which is neither expensive nor unbecoming a gentleman, and is apt to produce a better effect upon the receiver than ten times its value would do if it were given in coin."

"There is good sense in the motto on some tobacco-jars—how does it run?—

> Sweet Nicotina, in this jar of clay,
> Will stifle and drive old care away.
> It is no waste that unto ash she burns,
> Since all her substance into clouds she turns.
> Keep me on hand, and as the fumes arise
> You'll find a-*jar* the gates of Paradise.

"It is rather strange that Shakespeare makes no allusion to tobacco," said Father Bonaventure, "at least not to my knowledge. Ben Jonson and his contemporaries knew it well enough, though they seem to have preferred to indulge in jests at the expense of the smokers of their time."

"I think Shakespeare knew of the cigar and liked it well enough," replied the chaplain. "One can hardly imagine him as the jolly companion of Raleigh and Bacon at the 'Mermaid' without his tasting of the favorite weed brought over from Virginia. No doubt Raleigh, who incurred the displeasure of James I, did not find that it was to his credit in the King's eyes that he had introduced tobacco into English court society. At all events, James was a great hater of the smoking habit, and that may account for Shakespeare's reticence on the subject. For the rest, nearly all the great writers seem to have been fond of the pipe. Ruskin is the only exception that occurs to me. Even Emerson could spend hours in the company of men like Carlyle, the two sitting by each other's side with a pipe amid their musings. Perhaps the most pronounced lover of the pipe was Tennyson. He rarely smoked a cigar; but his

den, at the top of the house, was ornamented with all sorts of pipes, which had at the same time their practical use. There were hookahs, narghiles, meerschaums, and dhudeens; and his friends who came to see him after working hours could take their choice of brands—Virginia, Connecticut, Perique, Lone Jack, Killikinik, or Highlander. He himself preferred the old-fashioned clay pipe, breaking it after he had emptied it, and taking another. And whilst the clouds were rising, he seemed to feel most happy amidst the confusion of manuscripts and books piled up on chairs, shelves, tables, or strewn on the floor."

"Did you read the account of a recent London mission given by Father Bernard Vaughan, brother of the late Cardinal? It stated that he had a series of special services for the workingmen in the slums of the city, and that, at the close of the last meeting, he presented each member of his humble and temporary congregation with a briar pipe as a Christmas gift."

"That was a sensible idea, indeed, for the poor people do want some comfort, and when they realize that a priest feels for them in their natural wants, they will follow him in and believe what he tells them of the supernatural

necessities. I always found it the most effective way of gaining the confidence of the prisoners whom I had to attend whilst in San Francisco, to treat them to a plug of tobacco before I ever gave them a prayer-book or a word of religion."

"I see now why some German *parochus jovialis* writes in the *Pastoral Blatt* that one of the things in which a pastor ought to instruct young women who come to be married is, how to fill their husband's pipe and light it. If the tired spouse happens to come home after a day's hard work, he may be out of sorts and this kind of attention invariably softens the hardest temper."

"Oh, I knew a man," interjected Father Bonaventure, "who broke off an engagement of marriage because the lady had an insurmountable prejudice against tobacco. The couple were excellently suited to each other, and both were models of social and Christian virtue. But the young man, who was a fine writer and critic in the Art Department of the *Tribune,* vowed that he could not make his living if he could not smoke. He found it absolutely impossible to get together his ideas for an article until he had lit his pipe."

"That recalls one of Rudyard Kipling's

rather good pieces, called *The Betrothed,* in which occurs the often quoted line comparing the relative allurement of a woman and a good cigar. I think you will find it in that Commonplace Book, right behind your chair, Father Waldon, but it is, of course, too well known to all of us to quote again."

"Why, here is quite a selection of things on the subject of tobacco," Father Waldon exclaimed as he turned over the pages of Father Martin's scrapbook.

"I owe to smoking, more or less,
Through life the whole of my success;
With my cigar I'm sage and wise,
Without, I'm dull as cloudy skies.
When smoking, all my ideas soar,
When not, they sink upon the floor.
The greatest men have all been smokers,
And so were all the greatest jokers.
Then ye who'd bid adieu to care
Come here and smoke it into air."

"I am astonished, Father Martin," said the Friar, "to see that you treasure these eulogies. You are not a passionate smoker."

"Well," replied the chaplain, "I still continue to collect desultory bits for that scrapbook in order to complete what I began long ago. In

the earlier part of that folio there are no doubt numerous references to the same subject, for I always realized the beneficent influence of a custom that has become so general the world over, and by which kind Providence manages to increase the cheerfulness and the good done through its ministry. Of course, tobacco may be abused, and in some respects it seems an altogether unreasonable form of enjoyment. But it is much like certain modes or customs in dress. They make the wearer uncomfortable, and they would perhaps be ridiculous if they did not serve a secondary purpose which is commendable, and the influence of which, though less apparent, goes deeper. Fancy an ordinary man appearing in society with flaming red trousers or with a brass-plate or iron corset covering his body; yet in the soldier that which seems ridiculous otherwise rather inspires respect for the military calling. You wonder why I, despite my appreciation of the weed, rarely smoke. I will tell you: I believe in smoking for a purpose, even though that purpose be simply recreation.

"Smoking as a mere habit, and especially the common habit of smoking in public, appears to me unreasonable, or to say what is truer, I have

never seen any rational excuse for it. Where men are together by themselves, in the smoking-room, or in single company, the practice has something of a purpose. It helps the conversation, and gives a sort of congeniality to the social atmosphere; it is a concession to the obligations of convivial intercourse; for, as Thackeray says somewhere, men, with pipes or cigars among them, have great physical advantages in conversation. You may stop talking if you like, but the breaks of silence never seem disagreeable, being filled up by the puffing of the smoke; hence there is no awkwardness in resuming the conversation, no straining for effect, sentiments are delivered in a grave, easy manner. The cigar harmonizes the society, and throws an agreeable air at once around the speaker and the subject of conversation. Thackeray thought that the 'monstrous' good breeding of the Turks and American Indians was due to their habit of smoking. He believed that it generated a style of conversation, contemplative, thoughtful, benevolent, and unaffected; and he tells 'his dear Bob' that at home he used to do it 'up the chimney rather than not do it,' though he avowed this as a crime. In all this I fully agree with him. Tobacco is, like wine, a gentle stimu-

lant, a soothing anodyne, a cementer of friendship. Whilst it is well, perhaps, to be armed with this charming composer of happy feelings and agreements, its use has a limit, at least with the wise or with those who base all their actions on rational motives. To carry a cigar in one's mouth merely because of the stimulating or pleasant effect which it produces seems to me as incompatible with well-regulated motives of right living as if a man were to carry a bottle of wine around with him; for the latter serves exactly the same purpose as the former."

"There is some difference, Father Martin. It would not be so convenient to carry a flask of wine as it is to carry a cigar."

"And would you, if it were only a question of convenient carrying, allow that a sober gentleman or a priest might flourish the flask and refresh himself on the boulevard every now and then under the public gaze? I confess it does not strike me as becoming, and least of all compatible with the gravity and dignity of our calling. One rarely sees a gentleman of the true stamp smoke in public streets, for there is in the habit something that savors of self-indulgence, and men demand of us a certain exterior indicative of self-control. Well, I

meant to say, that observing occasionally the general effect of a man flourishing a lighted cigar in the highway, first led me to think of the necessity or rather the reasons which I had in my own case for the use of tobacco. And, considering the limitations of my social intercourse, I thought that I should curb the habit."

"They tell me that women are beginning to cultivate the habit of smoking," mused Father Bonaventure. "I should be sorry to see it become general among our people, though women smoke the pipe in parts of dear old Ireland, and I believe it is the custom also in South America."

"Oh, one meets in parts of Ireland or the negro population of the South old cronies among the women who suck the pipe. It is not so much that they crave the tobacco, though one can get to like it in time by using it habitually. It is a sort of substitute for food, and, in Ireland I believe, a result of famine days when a pipe of tobacco beguiled the hungry mouth. Our boys in the army resort to the same sedative when on a march they have to forego the regular mess. But it is no more becoming in a woman than a wig or a mustache would be.

Some women have a passion for aping the gait and manners of men. It is a mark of weakness with them, just as it is in children when they ape the peculiarities of their elders, though with the young the sense of imitation has some excuse in that it points to a wish, even if somewhat premature, to develop in the normal direction."

"I believe the habit has its origin among the demi-monde who follow the custom of Spanish duennas supposed to be graceful as well as spirited."

"No doubt. One can forgive the Southern folks certain extravagances in harmony with their tropic temperament. They are like their vegetation or their fauna, that is rich in color and exuberant; but it also develops the deadly poison in plant and tooth which destroys life. It is this quality in the Spanish woman which makes her enjoy the brutal sport of the bull fight, the same unnatural quality which caused the Roman dames in the amphitheatre to condemn to death the poor wretch of a slave who was beaten in the arena. We honor the man who fights, and by the same virtue we honor the woman who conquers by gentleness. The custom of smoking among young women is probably the outcome of travel among the Southern,

notably the Spanish, people, whose vivacity and resourceful graces are an attraction; but we can hardly afford to exchange the sober modesty and the reserve so attractive and admired by men of our race for the accompanying vices."

"A religious educator in one of our higher schools for girls argued the matter with me some time ago. She was not in favor of the practice, of course, but she thought since some of the pupils were of Spanish families it would not be wise to condemn the practice publicly; all the more, since you could not call it a sin."

"And what did you say?"

"I told her to keep it out of the school as a matter of discipline. It could not be called a sin; hence it should not be condemned as wrong. But it was irregular in the precincts of the college as it is in a railway car. The custom might be compared to the tatooing of the face which some Indian women—and those of high rank among them—had the habit of practising. If they chose to imitate the Indian usage outside, it was a matter of taste; but she was quite justified in prohibiting it in school.

CHAPTER IX

The Nun's Rosary Beads

Among the pupils of St. Catherine's Academy were a few not of the Catholic faith. They were exempted from attending the Christian Doctrine classes unless they wished to do so, and with the consent of their parents or guardians; in which case they might or might not take the examinations, as they preferred. Invocations were always said in common at the opening and closing of the classes and lectures. Morning and evening prayers, and grace at table was the rule for everybody present. To manifest anything like contempt for the religious opinions of others was understood to be vulgar and unladylike as well as uncharitable; any exhibition of this kind would have been visited by dismissal from the College, and that rarely if ever occurred.

The parents who sent their daughters to St. Catherine's in preference to any of the non-sectarian private or public schools, were, as might

be supposed, of the better class who had come in contact with the gentry of Catholic countries, and who realized the value of moral training and domestic virtue in conjunction with intellectual culture as an essential of true refinement. The old convent schools, especially of France and Belgium, have traced a reputation in this respect which is still remembered and cultivated as a mark of true womanly aristocracy in the broad sense of the word. This spirit was sedulously preserved in St. Catherine's.

Father Martin did not often come in contact with this class of pupils, unless they sought him for particular information. His aloofness, if such could be called the habit of avoiding discussion or conversation with the young girls who were not professed Catholics, was partly prudential. He felt averse to being considered a proselyting agent, and did not wish to compromise the authorities of the school who tacitly avoided any attempt at urging upon immature minds whose guardians were averse to it the adoption of the Catholic faith.

Needless to say he was ever ready to explain difficulties to those who might inquire. But he had a way of using secular culture and science,

when talking to the children in general, which directed attention to moral principles as the primary purpose of God's creation.

He possessed also a fund of illustrations gathered during travel in Europe which caused him to refer to customs, places and historical landmarks abroad, familiar to some of the scholars as well as the Sisters who had been educated in European institutions or who had travelled through the old countries under the guidance of their elders. Accordingly his manner with the pupils while reserved was also thoroughly friendly. They all liked him and would readily confide in his judgment whenever occasion called for consulting him.

Among the older pupils was one who had been for some time in a convent of the nuns in the Faubourg St. Germain in Paris. The severe traditions of the French communities, which preserve a certain asceticism that regards the violation of conventionalities, especially when they have the appearance of disrespect for authority, as a grave fault, are frequently a sore trial to young American children accustomed to an elasticity and freedom of expression discouraged abroad as not harmonizing with womanly decorum. Those who have lived suf-

ficiently long in both Europe and in the United States can see the excellence in either method and realize the charm that results from a proper blending of both. A friend of the family, travelling for a time in Europe, who was requested as former house physician to visit the American child at Paris, witnessing her homesickness, advised the mother promptly to take her back to a more congenial scholastic atmosphere.

This girl did not attend the Catechism classes. For the rest, she was thoroughly docile, read her Bible scrupulously, so as to preserve her Puritan faith, and was much esteemed for her bright intelligence. A certain sensitive humor which saw the ridiculous side of odd weaknesses in others, made her goodnatured despite an unconscious pride that courted and insisted on superiority. Her mistress plainly saw in the latter quality the secret of an ambition to excel in the virtues of the heart as well as in those of the mind. In intelligence the girl was easily ahead of her surroundings; not so in those characteristics which distinguish the noble woman of the valiant type. What she saw in the nuns, and admired, was a quality at once chaste and affectionate; dutiful yet unselfish; delicately thoughtful of those around them, yet courageous

and boldly intolerant of low methods. In other words, she felt that the profession and exercise of the religious life as she witnessed it imparted something of a superior quality like that of a queen whose regal sway is recognized by her influence without the strident voice of self-assertion. Some of the pupils seemed to have caught this spirit from their teachers. Not so she. Though unmistakably ladylike, Miss Cora was still outdone in the gentle and spontaneous manifestations of Christian virtues fostered among the girls who went to daily Communion.

If it instinctively puzzled her to find the gentle quality of forbearance, of that unaccountable ingenuity which anticipates the wishes of others without regard to personal attachments, and the thousand mysteries of charity and mercy which bore the stamp of altruism without any apparent human motive, she still sought the solution of it all in her Bible.

One day she came upon a nun in the linen room who was assorting garments for the poor.

Could she help?

"Yes, dear, if you find it pleasant."

The Dorcas Society had provided new outfits

for the poor children of the neighboring parish school who were to make their first Communion. There were also prayer books and rosary beads. These things were to be apportioned with the Christian names affixed to each according to a prepared list.

"Are these the same beads that you wear on your girdle, Sister?"

"Let us see." With this the nun took the rosary from her cincture and laid it beside the smaller beads meant for the children. She counted the decades, down to the cross.

"You pray on them. Does the size or quality of the beads make any difference in the prayers you say?"

"No. There are of course different kinds of bead strings, indicating various forms of prayer; but the common rosary, as we call it, has fifty-five beads or pearls in rows of ten, separated each by a larger bead."

"I have seen different ones when I was a child, in the house of an Armenian merchant with whom my father did business in Turkish rugs. He used to have a string of amber beads when walking in front of his store; but I don't think he prayed much. Father said it was just a habit with Turkish gentlemen, to toy with the

beads, much as the Orientals use a fan or a cane or whip."

"Perhaps they were prayer beads originally. One can use them no doubt in a perfunctory way without thinking much about God."

"When you pray on these beads you think of God. Couldn't you think of God without having beads in your hand? Would not a prayer book do it much better by fixing your eye on some definite thought about Him? I would use the Bible for that; it helps me a great deal. How can a string of beads, which are all alike, do any more than remind you of His goodness or His presence, the same as if you had just one, whereas a prayer book or the Scriptures present various thoughts verging on the same great truths?"

"You evidently do not know, child, what the rosary beads are meant to do. They present a series of thoughts which contain a whole story."

"May I know what the story is?"

"Let us finish the placing of the parcels, and then we can go out into the garden, and I will tell you, if you really want to know."

"Yes, I do; though I don't promise to pray on the beads, nor mean to be a Catholic."

"No, you are God's dear child, and that is

enough for the present. When He wants you to be anything else He will let you know."

They were sitting in the arbor close by the Lourdes Grotto, and the Sister began.

"You see, these beads are the story of Christ. Each single bead is a fact of which you are reminded as you finger it, just as you would be reminded by a knot in your handkerchief that you wanted to remember doing a certain thing which you might otherwise forget."

"But how can a child remember fifty facts in succession? You say these beads are for the children, and I suppose they are meant for the same purpose."

"It is not so difficult. Besides, there are only five or at most fifteen facts to be remembered. You see it is this way. The child learns about the life of Christ—His birth, His being raised as a little child, being sent to school, His friendships, His public activity and His death, as you read it in the New Testament. But the facts related about Christ in the Bible are not presented in a way that appeals to the child's inspiration or intelligence. The Bible is a record of history, devotion and prophecies, that is meant for the thoughtful mind of grown people. There are certain facts, however, which, though

not recorded expressly and in detail in the Bible, are yet perfectly plain truths, that may be accommodated to the child's mind as well as appeal to older persons. One of these facts which readily speaks to the young is that of Christ's Mother. She must have been very holy and, as we imagine, very beautiful. For nearly thirty years Christ was constantly with her in the little home at Nazareth, as He had been when a Babe at Bethlehem, and in Egypt on the flight of the Holy Family.

"If we look for the history of what Christ did during all those years in her company, we find very little. That little is practically all contained in the first two chapters of St. Luke's Gospel. St. Luke was an educated physician and wrote ostensibly for Theophilus, an Antiochian gentleman of rank. He made it a point scrupulously to ascertain, as he tells us, all the salient facts about Christ and His teaching.

"Of all the Gospels none is better accredited, I believe, as trustworthy contemporary history, even by the critics who deny the Divinity of Christ, than the account of St. Luke. Now he tells things about the Mother of Christ which he could only have known from herself in personal intercourse. Such are the details of her

becoming a mother, of visiting her relative in Hebron by way of preparing for the birth of her Infant, and of her going afterward to Jerusalem to offer the Child, and later bringing Him to the festival and temple school at the age of twelve.

"When you tell these things to a child you have no difficulty in suggesting how the Mother behaved in the known circumstances. We are familiar with the localities, the caravan roads between Nazareth, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Hebron, and the way to Egypt. So we employ our thoughts by picturing the Mother on these journeys, talk to her respectfully as we may, employing for the sake of due reverence the words used by the Angel and by Elizabeth in saluting her. In this way we approach God through her who was part of the scheme of Redemption like ourselves. Don't you think it helps us thus to pray and brings us nearer to God?"

The girl seemed dumbfounded; there were tears rolling down her cheeks, which was the cause of the Sister's stopping in her explanation.

After a few moments' pause, she resumed:

"You see, each of the five 'decades,' as we call the round of ten beads, represents one such

image of the Mother's action, appealing naturally to the child through its heart and to the imagination without any resort to fiction or false pretence."

"But why," said the girl, "do you repeat each such fact ten times in succession? If it is prayer, would not once suffice? There is not any virtue in many words for prayer if you fix your thought on God."

"It is for the purpose of fixing the thought that we repeat it. Each repetition intensifies the realization of the thought, just as you or I, or any person will repeat her or his protestations of affection."

"What do you say?—Oh, I know. 'Hail, Mary, full of grace.' I remember the girls in Paris chanting in May the *Je vous salue, Marie.* I thought it very beautiful, though it seemed to me a kind of superstition to repeat the same words continually."

"But do you not find the same in the prayers of your Bible, such as some of the Psalms? For example the hundred and thirty-fifth psalm, or any of the Hallel psalms wherein the same sentiment is continually repeated. It helps more deeply to impress us. You understand of course that a grown person can readily find the thought

of and association with God through such images. It is as if we made friends with the Mother of Christ to learn more of Him. Evidently St. Luke sought her to learn the very words spoken by the Angel and her answer. We come to love God better through companionship with those nearest to Him. Am I right?"

"Would you mind if I took one of the prayer books for the children, for I suppose they contain the way to recite the rosary?"

"Not at all, if your parents do not object to your doing so. You know I merely meant to answer your request to be told about the beads."

"I understand. Mama won't object, and papa doesn't care, so long as I don't become a Roman Catholic, for he would not like that. All of our servants are Catholic, but he is opposed to a change of religion in our family which is of old English stock; and I don't feel I should change; but I am glad to know the truth about the beads, which I think is beautiful and elevating."

CHAPTER X

Father Martin is Obliged to Discuss the Bible with Cora

"Sister, I am using a Greek Bible since I found that Mother Beatrice reads it, as she told me, every day. Professor Murray says she knows Greek better than himself. Why doesn't she teach us? Though I don't find any fault with the professor, who makes the study of Homer quite interesting. I suppose religious don't care to teach those pagan authors that deal in romantics. But then she might give us some knowledge of Plato, whose philosophy, I understand, is altogether elevating; and that ought to be good for us who in liberal education aim at the development of moral or spiritual character. Don't you think so?"

The Sister hardly knew what to say. Pagan classics are an anomaly in woman's education. If they develop the esthetic taste to a certain extent, they appeal much more to the heroic element in man. Homer's women may be ad-

mirable in many respects, but they furnish no models for Christian womanhood.

"Why not ask Mother Beatrice herself?" came the answer of the nun after some thought. "She would perhaps let you read Plato privately with her; though I really know nothing about it."

When Miss Cora at the next opportunity put the question to the Mistress of Studies the Mother laughed merrily.

"You study Homer for the Greek. What Plato teaches—and his language is not half as good—you can find anywhere in early Christian literature. Nearly all the Christian philosophers down to the time of St. Augustine were Platonists. Some wrote in Greek, others in Latin. They had studied Plato and found in the psychology and metaphysics of the Athenian thinker much that served them in their opposition to the prevailing naturalism and materialism of the Romans of their day."

"Why don't we read any of these authors then, instead of Xenophon, Cicero and Virgil or Horace? I often wonder that, if there were Christians who wrote and spoke good Greek and Latin, we should neglect them for the pagan authors; or are these so superior in language

that they outweigh the matter and thought of the Christian writers?"

"Not that. We have Lactantius, styled 'the Christian Cicero,' and much of St. Jerome's and St. Leo's writings which vie in elegance of expression and style with anything that the Augustan period produced; but like much of our classical art of the Renascence, the choice of models has become a fixed tradition since the humanists undertook to set the standard. Being good, and satisfying both pagan and Christian scholars, the old masters have been retained. But that does not mean they are the only models worthy of imitation or study. You see, it is much like the reading of the Psalms, which you tell me you like, and which your grandfather wants you to read as your prayers. They are reflections of truth and goodness, but I fancy you find such reflections elsewhere, and perhaps as beautifully if not more beautifully expressed, by modern poets like Keble, your favorite, or Newman."

"I see. By the way, Mother, you mention the Psalms. Do you know I have been sorely puzzled lately to understand some of them—not the meaning so much as the manifest purpose of certain passages and indeed a whole series

which I find it difficult to reconcile with the idea of piety or religion. The thought had never occurred to me before; because I have been accustomed to make a selection as found in the church prayer book. Recently I have read the Bible systematically in the Greek text, to help me in the language test at the examination. Then I found things which made me doubt about the Bible."

"Would you mind speaking to Father Martin about that? He really knows better. You know he is a theologian and you need not be in the least afraid of him. He won't take it amiss if you ask him anything."

"But he is a priest, you know; and might think it his duty to make a Catholic of me—and my father would never consent."

"No, he won't, unless you should want it very badly yourself. If I know him, he would rather prevent you from simply following his lead. He is good at objecting and, besides, you have got a mind of your own. All you need do is to present your difficulties. If his answer doesn't satisfy you as reasonable, don't take it. You are not a child, and you can be on your guard."

"I would rather discuss it with you. But I shall ask him since you say he knows."

When the chaplain went to the Convent library the following morning to consult a copy of the Migne Patrology for a paper he was to read at the next clerical conference, he was met by the young lady who had scruples about the Psalms. The Father, not knowing her difficulty, passed on without noticing her. But the nun, conscious of Miss Cora's anxiety, stopped him as he entered the room to introduce the subject; and at the same time called the girl.

"I am not a Catholic, Father, but I read the Bible. Lately I have had some difficulty in understanding certain sentiments expressed in the Book, notably in the Psalms. I asked Mother here for an explanation, knowing that she is familiar with the Psalter as she recites it daily in Latin. She referred me to you."

"You read the King James version?" said Father Martin.

"Yes; sometimes the Revised Version of 1883, which does not much differ from the King James. More recently I have as a matter of curiosity been studying the Greek text. But my difficulty is not so much the language as the sentiment. To give an example. In Psalm 109, verse 6, I read expressions like this in the form of a prayer:

Set thou the sinner over him
When he is judged may he be condemned
May his prayer be turned to sin
May his days be few, and his children cast out
May there be none to help him
May his name be blotted out—

How can anyone assume that God, who is merciful, could inspire such a prayer; and this is apparently put in the mouth of David."

"Where do you get the authority for assuming that God inspired such a prayer?"

"Why, isn't the Bible the Word of God—I mean inspired?"

"Yes. God may inspire a man to write history or sentiment as history, without inspiring or approving the sentiment. You find expressions like this in the Bible: 'There is no God,' yet you don't suppose that God inspired that sentiment?"

"Oh, no. But that sentiment is, I believe, prefixed by the words: 'The fool thinketh (or sayeth) in his heart: There is no God.' "

"Just so. In the old Hebrew literature, written three thousand years ago, you will find the sentiments of fools recorded, as well as the wisdom of the men of God."

"Why is it written?"

"To record experiences of men from which we may learn not only what to do but what to avoid."

"But these prayers are apparently accredited to men of God, like David."

"Very well. David was a man of God. He was also very human. He could do things and did do things, as recorded by the historians, who were holy men, for which he would be deposed and put in the penitentiary to-day, even though he was very sorry when he recognized his fault."

Cora smiled. The discussion was becoming interesting. She liked frank speech and gladly faced a truth, though it might be ugly, so long as it was truth.

"I can understand David doing wrong through impulse or under temptation; but I cannot understand how he could pray with what seems deliberate malice toward his fellowmen. It seems contrary to the sense of God's goodness which David himself describes in other parts of the Psalter, and it is worse than the prayer of the Pharisee who thought himself better than others, but never asked God to destroy the poor publican whom he despised. How can one believe in the command to love

God and one's neighbor, and at the same time preach hatred of that neighbor in such bitter terms?"

"So it would seem. Nor can we be quite sure that the words of psalms like those you refer to are actually David's words and not rather a recitation of the words spoken against him by his enemies and the enemies of his people. There are, if you will notice, expressions in the context of those same psalms which suggest that David, or whoever spoke in the name of Israel, merely records the imprecations in order to contrast them with Jehovah's spirit of forgiveness. He says: 'Such are the thoughts of them who detract me before the Lord,' and gives similar indications that he is quoting others. Moreover, we have to deal with an original text written without vowels, without punctuation marks and largely in ideogram or signs wholly different from our phonetic and syllabic modern way of writing. The early translators of the Hebrew text, though scrupulous in their renderings, left much to the traditional interpretation of the reader. Later copyists, during centuries of political turmoil, migration, persecutions, wars, before the art of printing could give permanency to a definite reading of old

documents, often neglected details in hastily transcribing parts; they were inaccurate, relied on memory, and thus allowed erroneous words or passages to creep into their versions. The psalms to which you refer were not always employed as prayers; they were often simply public readings to recall the blessings which Jehovah had granted His chosen people amid the persecutions of their enemies. At other times they were chanted, much like the epics or troubadour poetry of the minnesingers returning from the Holy Land at the time of the Crusades, telling of love in exile and of hatred among the strangers.

"But let us assume for a moment that we have the true reading of the original words, and the exact rendering of the sentiment implied in the Psalms to which you refer, and that the imprecations are not merely repetitions of the enemies' attitude which the exile recites to move Jehovah to compassion for his own. Could you not conceive in the Hebrew a mood of hostility against the enemies of God that would explain and even condone the use of such imprecations in a devout Jew? If you were to enter the synagogue today in any land, on the feast of Purim, you would witness a strange

devotion, in which the so-called cursing Psalm might fit quite naturally. This day commemorates the deliverance of the Jews from the persecution at the time of Esther in the reign of King Xerxes of Persia. The Hebrew declaration of freedom is celebrated by the reading of the Book of Esther on both the vigil and the morning of the anniversary. When the rabbi who reads from the Megillah or scroll comes to the part in which the name of the enemy of the Hebrew people occurs, the entire congregation rises, hisses and shouts: 'Let his name be blotted out of the book of life—let him perish with the wicked.' This imprecation is but a repetition of the maledictions uttered in Haman's day by every devout Jew. Here you have an instance of piety expressing itself by imprecation amid fasting and the bestowal of presents, just as Christians do at Christmas or Easter to celebrate their deliverance from the enemy of their salvation.

"You are not surprised to hear in the mouths of civilized nations war songs which express hope and prayer for the destruction and annihilation of the enemy of their countries. The national feeling among the Hebrews was essentially bound up with their religious en-

thusiasm, and both are voiced in the same breath.

"Or would you be much surprised to hear our hostler, Patrick, swear at English statesmen who hinder the propaganda for independence of Ireland? He is a good fellow and thoroughly religious and attached to the faith of his Irish forefathers which holds love of God and one's neighbor as a fundamental principle; but I can readily conceive him praying with all earnestness and the warm-hearted charity toward Ireland that the British lion might be dashed to smithereens on the rock of Irish independence.

"You read in the New Testament that Christ appealed to the Pharisees in words such as these: 'You have heard that it has been said to them of old—an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, but I say to you be not angry with your brother.' Evidently our Lord refers to a common attitude of mind among the Jews, one that is found among all primitive races, and from which the Hebrew people were to be weaned gradually. In David's day this law of revenge, which we find revived in later ages and down to our day as the *vendetta* was probably still recognized.

"There is another explanation for the use of

the language to which you refer in the Old Testament writing, and that is the fact that much though not all of it is prophetic. Expressions of threat, of retribution or vengeance and visitations of evils are uttered in the way of warnings, forebodings, just as we attribute judgment to God when we say 'Vengeance is the Lord's.' In short, the language of the Bible must be understood with the limitations and modifications of the time, place, persons and conditions generally in which it was uttered or written."

"Thank you, Father. You have made the matter very clear, but for one thing. If the Bible is the Word of God, addressed to man, it cannot lose its value of truth at any time. We reverence it accordingly, assuming that it is inspired for all ages, all classes of men as the rule of faith and right living. Yet if what you say is true, and I see no reason to doubt it, then the Bible may cease for us to be the Word of God, because the conditions existing among the Hebrews have changed and brought with it a change of the rule of faith and right living. Do you know what I mean? The idea of the entire Bible, as we have it, being inspired seems to be lost in your interpretation. Or don't you be-

lieve as I do, as a Protestant, that the whole Bible is the Word of God and therefore unchangeable truth?"

"Assuredly I do," said Father Martin. "This is interesting. Let us go out and have the matter discussed in the open under God's eye."

They walked out, the nun with them. When they came to a rustic bench, Father Martin invited them to sit down.

"Do you see this old cherry tree? Tell me who made it."

"Why, God, of course."

"He made it for the use of men, did He not? And it has been His work all these years just as it was when first grown to its fulness, bearing fruit. It has served its purpose of providing fruit to past generations, and it does so still each summer. Do you think it is a perfect tree, such as you might choose to make if you had the power to create a cherry tree? Do you believe it has undergone any changes since first it began to bear fruit? Have any of its branches rotted and become, so to say, useless, bearing no longer either fruit or foliage?"

"Undoubtedly, for it has stood here many

years and has weathered many a storm and seen many changing seasons which have affected its growth and its shape."

"Now, if you found a branch of it that had become useless, and had fallen to the ground, actually severed from the tree, would you still hold that that useless branch is God's creation and has served its purpose while bearing fruit for a past generation?

"Well, just this creative energy that went into the making of that fallen severed branch which has no use today but might be burnt, is the kind of inspiration that went into the making of the Bible. The fact that parts of the Bible have become useless, except as illustrations or witnesses of a past providence and everlasting principles proving God's creative and guiding power in the world, does not undo their claim of being inspired originally. There are parts of that tree that today are still clinging as branches to it, yet which were better cut off or pruned away, because they actually hinder the sap from flowing into other parts that are healthy and productive. Yet they are all part of the creative energy that went to the making of the tree. Just so there are parts of the Bible, commands, facts, precedents, that are

obnoxious, not to be obeyed. They are none the less inspired, and they still have their use in showing God's dealings with men in the past. They demand our respect as coming from Him.

"To understand the Bible one needs to know history, the mind, the genius, habits, language of the past, a thing which is beyond the scope and power of most men who are not specially employed in its study.

"Still, since God inspired the Bible to teach men, as you say, truth to be believed and conduct to be observed, He has taken care that its essential contents be preserved for us. But the right interpretation demands the same superintending Providence and Divine guidance that went into its first composition.

"I think," said Father Martin, rising, "you have caught my answer to your difficulty. Think it over, it is worth while." With that he went back to the library.

CHAPTER XI

The Chaplain Learns Something from the Father Confessor about St. Francis

The fact that Father Bonaventure had been for a number of years the spiritual director of the community at St. Catherine's had created among the religious, and to an extent also among the pupils of the Convent, a pronounced devotion to St. Francis of Assisi. The influence of the Poverello extended not only to the ascetical life, in that it fostered among the nuns a spirit of marked humility and of an intelligent love of poverty, but it contributed largely to the educational progress of the Institute.

During the year preceding Father Martin's coming to St. Catherine's the gentle Capuchin had been giving weekly conferences to the nuns, the burden of which was the peculiar mission of St. Francis in the regeneration of Christian art. This venerable son of Assisi was something of an artist himself. He had a fine appreciation of the Old Masters and a taste for

combining artistic decoration with religious symbolism. He and Father Martin were kindred minds in this respect, and their conversation when they were alone on their walks in the garden or in the chaplain's rooms frequently turned on topics of art. At other times they discussed experiences of travel, but nearly always with some reference to the beauties of nature and art.

They were both well versed in botanical science as also in physics, and knew how to turn their knowledge to advantage in illustrating moral or religious truth. Thus the chaplain became more and more interested in the outdoor life about him and tested the knowledge and experience of his Capuchin friend, who entered with a delightful simplicity into the studies of Father Martin whenever opportunities offered themselves, which was quite often.

Christmas was close at hand and the nuns were in great glee over a beautiful oil painting that had been sent to them by a lady just returned from Italy. The picture was a copy of St. Francis of Assisi before the Nativity group in the grotto of Græcio, by Edouard von Steinle. It is an inspiring presentation of the Christmas scene described in the annals of

Assisi: Fra Leone celebrating the Mass on the projecting shelf of a rock, with the crib, Mary and St. Joseph behind it. St. Francis, who could never be persuaded to accept priest's orders, is pictured kneeling on one side, with outstretched arms, as was his custom to pray; and the angelic choir above, chanting their Gloria in Excelsis. The artist knew well how to combine the different blessings that have grown out of the mystery of the Incarnation, by grouping in front of the midnight cave the shepherds with their pipes playing the Adeste Fidelis, and around them on the one hand the friars of the Seraphic Order, and on the other the mothers and children of the countryside in adoring attitude.

Father Bonaventure came of course to admire it. The good friar beamed with a quiet joy as he gazed upon the canvas and pointed out the details of the picture which was to form the background for the Christmas cradle of the Holy Infant.

Our chaplain took a sort of mischievous pleasure in quizzing the dear old Capuchin about it. He liked to test the humility of the pious monk, though he held him in high esteem for his learning as well as for his piety.

"I don't see any Capuchins in the picture. Evidently St. Francis wanted only Observantines and Friars Minor of the Order to attend his celebration of Christmas."

"Oh, but we are regular members of the Franciscan Observance," eagerly protested the friar.

"I don't see how you can be. As I understand history, Matteo di Bassi separated from the Franciscan Observance and was treated by the Superior as an apostate, if not also as a mad enthusiast."

"That may be true or not. But if so, the first General of our reform resembled the saintly Founder, who also was treated as a madman by his contemporaries. Holy men may agree in their estimate of the end to be attained through sanctity, yet differ in temperament and the choice of the means to reach the same perfection. The Venerable Matteo di Bassi—we call him Matteo of Urbino—was a true follower of St. Francis. Our constitution of Albicina shows by its likeness to the original observance laid down in the *Speculum Perfectionis,* that we keep the holy rule as it was given by the Seraphic Saint to his first followers."

"But he changed the dress of the Minims."

"That is not so sure. He undoubtedly adopted what he believed had been the habit worn by St. Francis. There is the portrait of the saint by Margaritone in the library of Christ Church, Oxford, bearing witness to the use of the Capuchin habit before the Minister General adopted it. Possibly the change in the fastening of the Cappa, which is at any rate very slight, had been made by the earlier Observantines before Clement VII approved the habit."

"Well, Father Bonaventure, I presume you are right. It is not the habit, after all, that makes the true Franciscan. But do tell me, do you really believe all this belles-lettristic clamor, which makes St. Francis the patron of the arts and of letters, according to writers of our day, interpreting Dante and Giotto and all the train of pre-Raphaelites, is founded in reason and not merely the outcome of imagination and a tendency to a blind hero-worship, with the resultant enthusiasm commonly taken up by the multitude which does not discriminate? I take it that St. Francis was a lover of poverty, simplicity and that restraint which discards the externals of beauty and magnificence. We are told that he was opposed to anything like orna-

mental display in the erection of monasteries and institutions under the patronage of the Order. The very dress he chose and the convents he built show the opposite of what you would call artistic temperament and taste in their constructor."

"That might be said of the Founder of Christianity as well, and yet Christian art derives all its virtue from Him. Even the products of Oriental and Greek genius, from the monuments of the Egyptian dynasties, in which we recognize the first prophetic indications of Messianic expectation, down to Phidias in Greece and the Augustan period in Rome, bear the mark of Christian inspiration by a sort of foreshadowing. Yet the enlightened world of Rome had pointed to Christ as a fool. So was it with Francis—'ce fou sublime, dont la folie confondit la sagesse du monde.'"

"Oh, I admit that the saint by his wonderful spirit of self-denial and humility not only exercised great influence upon the men of his time and of after ages, but kindled a new spirit of charity by his manner of life and preaching which caused fresh life to flow into the decaying members of both the ecclesiastical and the secular world. Nor is there any doubt that the

age of mendicants down to the Renascence was followed by an unexpected revival of art and letters. What I would question is that this was due entirely or even chiefly to St. Francis."

"There is one good proof," answered the friar, whose manner was gradually becoming flushed with the eagerness begotten by affection for his patron. "There is one proof to show that the sudden change in the sphere of artistic taste which we notice in the thirteenth century, and after, throughout Catholic Europe is directly due to the influence of St. Francis. That is the fact which makes him from that time forth and during several generations the devout object of the fine arts. It is the man, the monk of Assisi, around whom centres the activity and genius of the painter and sculptor. It is St. Francis and the peculiar asceticism created by him which inspires the erection of churches such as had not been built before his day. The guilds, tertiaries, troubadours make the name of Francis, and his spiritual daughter, St. Clare, the watchwords and honorary titles which create and fill the cathedrals not only with statuary and paintings of their idol but with hymnal music that echoes his name and the virtues which he impersonated."

Father Bonaventure spoke with a quiet eloquence which sounded almost like a sermon—probably, was the echo of a panegyric of the saint whose life he sought to reproduce in his own. Father Martin hardly ventured to interrupt him, but by his attentive and inquiring, if not also admiring, manner urged him on to say that:

"It was an intense love of nature springing from simplicity and childlike purity which caused an instinctive and complete harmony between his inner being and the images of God's outward creation, that made St. Francis a poet, and hence an artist in the truest sense of the word. Every artist is a poet. The history of the great masters amply illustrates this."

"Yes," said Father Martin, "I can understand how the childlike disposition of the saint made him love the things of nature, and how when he had seen God in His creation as a permanent background or first cause of all things, there would develop that mystic sense which not only discerns beauty in nature but reads a symbolic language written all over it."

"Precisely. It was this love of nature which, when translated in the soul of Francis, became love of God, that is the vivifying element in that

mystic school of thought of which St. Bonaventure was to be the theological exponent."

"But how do you reconcile the principle of abject poverty of the saint, and his passion for self-effacement, with the display and opulence that go with the development of art? St. Bonaventure might speculate on mystic union with God and retain the virtue which despises the material wealth coveted by the lovers of things beautiful. Poverty and art seem to be as distinct and separate as privation and richness."

"Perhaps the distinction lies in the vision of things beautiful and a desire for their possession. It is true that the latter waits upon the former. But the love of beauty, which I take to be art, so far as it is a personal virtue, may be shared by the creature as the possession of the Creator. The child is happy in its father's possession quite apart from its prospective title to the same as heir. In a sense the child is absolutely poor, yet it has the full sense of joy in its parents' contentment. The renunciation of all participation in the ownership of things gave St. Francis the sense of freedom from responsibility and of that universal possession which he shared as a son of his heavenly Father.

After all, if we have food and raiment, what more can we want? And here we have the key to that love of nature which is love of God, and of the Beautiful as recognized in the God of nature. I mean, the virtue of voluntary renunciation or poverty.

"It is the poverty, the mendicant spirit as a religious bond that facilitated and intensified, if it did not produce, the appreciation of art as love of the beautiful. In pursuing the habit of renunciation St. Francis enlarged his possession. As a tramp he owned everything he saw, sharing all with God, his and its Creator. It is our wants that make us slaves. He wanted none of the beautiful things he saw, but could feast his soul and senses upon them without being responsible for their keep. Thus poverty and nature, or the beautiful in God's creation, became identified in him. As men personify nature, so he personified poverty, which led him to nature's appreciation and love."

"I see. He personified poverty, which put him in possession of Nature, and made her his bride, his *inamorata* in the house of God."

"Just so. It was a perfectly natural process. You remember how, one day, before he had made his choice, on returning from a festival,

he became strangely pensive and absorbed. Whatever had passed—possibly some vision like Dante's Beatrice, and out of his reach at the time—there had suddenly awakened in his heart that consuming longing after an ideal which comes to the young in the grace of a holy vocation. The usually light-hearted Giovanni Bernardone was tarrying behind his laughing companions.

" 'What ails thee, Bernardone, art thou in love?'

" 'Aye, so it seems to me. And yet I know not any maid so fair, so noble and so good that she could satisfy the cravings of my heart.'

" 'He is lovesick,' they said. And so he was. He had had a glimpse of some beautiful being, a swift vision of some fair reality, and his heart went out to the lightsome form beyond his reach. But the longing once stirred goes on. for the heart hungers after the Beauty immortal and unmeasured which alone can fill it all, for it was created for infinite enjoyment. And so he came to recognize the Eternal Beauty toward which he might lawfully and joyfully reach out. For he would cast aside the earthly lure of temporal love, the possession of the gilded deckings which his merchant father

traded in. He would wear a simple garment that would please his choice, wait on his heavenly Father who clothed the birds of the air, the lilies of the field, all Nature in her fitting robes."

"Then Francis had tasted the pleasures of the world, and been disappointed, you think?"

"No doubt he had experienced the follies of thoughtless boyhood. But he had escaped the singeing of his faculties from the flame that allures. He had preserved that simplicity which rarely outlasts the early battles of life, but which some natures keep, like Tom Pinch in *Martin Chuzzlewit,* despite the most discouraging encounters."

"I am glad to see you think well enough of Charles Dickens to quote him in this connection. You must have read him before you entered the Capuchins."

"In part, yes. I like to read him still. He affords abundant food for reflection and personal correction. Besides, one gets to know something of the outside world with which you have to deal at odd intervals, without having to pay toll to the Pecksniffs for what you learn."

"Father Bonaventure, you are 'a brick,' as we Americans say, though our English brethren

are horrified at such transatlantic idioms. You almost persuade me to become a Capuchin, or at least a Minim or Conventual. Only, I am addicted to the pipe and to playing cards, which of course I should have to give up if I entered the Order."

"Not necessarily. Certainly, if one wants to follow the ideal of St. Francis it is essential to make a sacrifice of things not necessary. Human nature is rather a restive animal that needs constant pulling in by the reins, but sometimes you have to make concessions, short of sin. And neither tobacco nor cards are instruments of sin unless used to excess or in circumstances that might create false impressions or scandalize the weak."

"But we've got away from our subject. You implied that the mystic theology of St. Bonaventure found its sources in the realization of the beauty of nature as the reflection of divine love. That would lead to the conclusion of there being a necessary connection between true art and religion, would it not?"

"Quite so," answered the Capuchin. "Indeed, the word *art* is, as you know, the Greek for *virtue*, which means in its broad sense religion. The modern Latins retain the idea when

they speak of an article *de vertu,* meaning an object of artistic or rare worth. Indeed, art is a species of religion, in which man pays homage to the Divine Beauty. Such was the idea of art in the golden age of Hellenic civilization. When high ideals in religion are united to most perfect natural forms, whether expressed through the unity of various elements in architecture, or in harmony of sounds, or by colors as in painting, or in the order of perfect organic symmetry as in sculpture, we have art in its truest sense. Ruskin, I think, goes so far as to maintain that the realization of the Divine Presence in nature, and the love of nature which springs from and accompanies this consciousness, are essential to, and the only promise of true art."

"Indeed," continued the friar, "the mystic school of art had its source in the realization of the highest ideal of divine love expressed in the purest types of nature. If we trace the origin of the two most characteristic features in the life of St. Francis, his asceticism and his love of nature, we shall find but one source, that is an intense love, which made him identify everything about him with the motives of his Maker. This love terminates in a complete union with the divine will, and produces the harmony be-

tween the creature and his Creator, identical in a manner with mystic intuition, wherein the soul communes with God directly, and faith yields to limited vision. Someone—I believe Victor Cousin—has said that 'he who pretends to commune with God in the mystic way thereby ignores Him in His outward manifestations.' The philosophy of St. Francis answers that objection. Few saints were more closely united to Him, receiving, as he did, almost all the important commissions regarding the institute of his Order, like Moses, directly from God. With St. Francis, self no longer existed. It was merged in God. And when he looked upon nature he saw it, too, acting in harmony with that sublime sentiment of entire unselfishness so beautifully expressed in the lines of a German poet:

"O welcher reine heil'ge Edelmuth
In der Natur und rings im All,
Wo Eins dem Andern, und wo Alles Allen
Mitwirkung, Hilfe, alle seine Kraft
Und Liebe, selbst sein eignes schönes Dasein
Herzinnig treu, mit stiller Freudigkeit
Dahingibt, ohne je daran zu denken
Ob auch ein Stäubchen nur dadurch, bezahlt sei."

"In reality this spirit of the contemplative in

nature has always done more for art, and even for abstract science, than did dexterity in handling the brush, or the chisel, or man's toiling brain. The religious painters have been more successful as Christian artists than those who possessed the secrets of perfect technique or accurate knowledge of physical form and anatomy. So has it been in science as well as in art. We know how Cardinal di Lugo, that giant mind, went in his subtle perplexities of theology to consult the boyish novice John Berchmans, knowing that God would reveal to the prayerful intuitions of the young saint the science withheld from his own comprehensive intellect. Hence, when we come to judge of the effect of asceticism upon art, we must lay aside the rules of the connoisseur. Rio has it somewhere that 'Mysticism is to painting what ecstasy is to psychology.' In order to estimate it correctly we must associate ourselves by a strong and profound sympathy to certain religious ideas, with which this artist in his studio or that monk in his cell have been more particularly preoccupied, and combine the results of this preoccupation with the corresponding sentiments in the minds of their fellows."

"Here then you have the answer to your

query how to reconcile the spirit of poverty in St. Francis with his love of art. You remember how he became all aglow with holy indignation when, on one of his visitations, he found that the friars had laboriously built a magnificent convent; and how it took all the influence of Cardinal Hugolino, the then protector of the Order, to pacify him. 'I do not acknowledge this as our home,' he called out, 'nor will I recognize as my friars those who dwell therein.' But when he had reared altars and temples to the Most High, his zeal for their adornment knew no limit. He wanted to be poor, and no other saint in the Church has so entirely made that title of *il poverello di Dio* his own. His patrimony he gave for the restoration of a church. Long before he had laid the foundation of the Order of Friars Minor, he had devoted himself to the reconstructing and beautifying of the house of God. He went from door to door begging alms, crying aloud in the market-place: 'Come, help me build the Church of St. Damian.' It was a passion with him, and people wondered what he meant. Yet he went on restoring. Church after church arose, newly adorned; St. Damian, St. Peter Apostle, and the Portiuncula, in his native city of Assisi.

"Cardinal Newman tells us somewhere that it was architecture which directed the thoughts of Father Hutchinson, of the London Oratory—one of the most zealous priests he ever knew—toward the Catholic faith. Well, it was architecture which, though in another way, led our saint to the reform of the spiritual edifice that was swaying to and fro amidst many conflicting elements. When, prostrate before the crucifix in the church, he had first heard the voice of his Lord bidding him rise and uphold His tottering house, he applied the command as referring entirely to the material church. God had meant the injunction in another sense, and the saint was imperceptibly drifting toward the accomplishment of the divine will by beginning his task in this way.

"Thus it was actually art that led St. Francis to asceticism. With his own hands he set in order and embellished whatever about God's habitation was out of order, and when in after days he found a lovely spot, he would dedicate it to the special glory of the Most High by raising there a chapel or an altar, or a niche in which to place the statue of some saint, so that it might remind the passing wanderer how good God is in giving us such beautiful things. In a

lovely grove between Gemini and Porcaria he erected a church in honor of the Blessed Virgin, very like to the one of St. Maria de Angelis, in Portiuncula. We read in his life how, returning from Arezzo to Florence, he was compelled by sickness to stop a few days at Gangheretti. God had blessed the place by causing a fountain to spring up at the request of the languishing saint. As if to guard and beautify the spot where 'God had been,' he employed the brief time of his convalescence in building a wall about and adorning it."

"St. Francis was undoubtedly gifted with a rich imagination," said Father Martin; "he was a natural poet, though I presume he cared less for form than for imagery."

"That is not true," rejoined Father Bonaventure, taking up the subject with renewed emphasis. "What the saint has left us of his unquestioned compositions shows that he was not neglectful of form. Poetry, in all ages, has had two principal sources, one secular, the other, religious. Thus, at the time of St. Francis, the Provençal minnesingers sang in glowing words of their lady love. The Oriental minstrels of returning crusaders added an element of voluptuous expression. On the other hand,

we find in Italy a healthy element of Christian poetry asserting its sway from Dante down to Tasso, and beyond. And the sources of this stream spring from St. Francis and his disciples.

"You have read the story of the famous troubadour who passed among the people as the 'king of poets,' *rex versuum*. He went one day, in a frivolous mood, to hear the strange Assisian preach. Then he laid down his gold-and-purple-trimmed mantle, and begged from our saint the garb of a Franciscan monk. No longer did Brother Pacifico delight the princes in their banquet halls, or the people at high harvest-time; yet we cannot doubt that he sang for the monks, or that he aided St. Francis to put into rhyme the hymns which the saint uttered in his wanderings, and which Brother Leo, who generally accompanied him, always noted down. St. Bonaventure tells us that amidst his frequent infirmities St. Francis often expressed a desire to hear music.

"There are among his writings a number of canticles in the vernacular and hymns for the use of the nuns of St. Clare. If we may judge from the few specimens yet remaining and accredited to him, they must have been exquisitely beautiful. There is a peculiar simplicity

of style, a sweet flow of melody in the Italian of that day. If I had a copy of Wadding here I could illustrate what I mean."

The two priests had been discussing St. Francis in the aula of the Convent, where the large canvas of Steinle's was housed for the time. Meanwhile they had missed the supper bell, and when one of the Sisters came to call them they were loath to part from each other.

"Why not stay and take a bite with me?" said the chaplain. "Unless you are bound to return to the monastery at once we could continue our talk about St. Francis. In a little you might convert me. Moreover, I have a copy of Wadding, and you could probably find the verses of which you spoke a while ago. I should be much interested."

The cook was delighted to have Father Bonaventure sup with the chaplain.

After the meal both priests returned to the library of Father Martin, who lit his pipe, and having made his companion comfortable in a chair beside the table, began to search for the work of the Franciscan annalist Wadding.

"Come over here, and locate the volume. You must be familiar with it, I fancy."

And so Father Bonaventure was, whose face lit up with a happy smile as he laid hold of a tome bound in old parchment and bearing the inscription, "Wadding *Opera.*"

"What is this?" he exclaimed, momentary disappointment upon his large features—*'Practica de la teologia mistica.'* "

"You have got hold of the wrong Wadding," said Father Martin. "That's the Jesuit—an Irish-Spaniard. Your Wadding is further over on the same shelf. They were both Irish, you know, and I like to keep them together. It gives me some fun to imagine how they would like to fight—a Jesuit and a Franciscan—the one from Armagh and the other from Waterford. Here, near a fine edition (Rome, 1806) of the *Scriptores Ordinis Minorum.*"

After some search Father Bonaventure brought forth the tome containing the lines he had referred to.

"Listen to this prayer:

'O altissimo omnipotente glorioso Idio
Illumina le tenebre del core mio.
Doname te prego per tua gran bontade
Fede drita, speranza certa, con perfecta caritade.
E fame da mi havere perfecto cognoscimento
A cio che sempre observa el tuo sancto comandamento.'

'O Almighty, Glorious God on high, enlighten the darkness of my heart. Grant me, I pray Thee, in Thy bounty, right faith, firm hope, and perfect charity. And let me plainly know myself, so that I may ever observe Thy holy laws.' —But this is not what I wanted. This prayer appeared first in an ancient life of St. Clare, and it is not quite certain that St. Francis himself wrote it, though there can hardly be much doubt of it. Both its simplicity and the occasion of its composition would favor his authorship. But here is the *Canticum Solis* (de lo frate sole), unquestionably 'one of the finest productions of sacred poetry,' which of course you know. Oh, here are the hymns *In foco amor mi misi,* and *Amor de caritade.* They are also found in the works of St. Bernardine of Siena, and sometimes attributed to Fra Jacopone, the worthy forerunner of Dante. Listen. They all breathe the spirit of St. Francis; his last words as, prostrate on the ground and too exhausted to reach his beloved Assisi, he turns toward the cherished city:

'Benedicta tu civitas a Domino
Quia per te multae animae salvabuntur,
Et in te multi servi altissimi habitabunt,
Et de te multi eligentur ad regnum aeternum.'

'Blessed art thou, O city, by the Lord, for through thee many souls shall be saved. In thee shall dwell many servants of the Most High, and out of thee many shall be chosen for eternal glory.'

"That blessing was surely verified. Less than forty years after, Assisi had sent out of her novitiate 200,000 monks bearing the seeds of the spirit of St. Francis into every land on the globe."

Father Martin had been quietly listening with rapt attention. Indeed, while he knew that the dear old Capuchin was wonderfully gifted, himself a poet, like his holy patron, the chaplain had never heard him speak with such a flow of sacred enthusiasm as on this night.

It was quite late when the genial friar took leave of St. Catherine's, and Father Martin prepared to retire for the night by gathering up the volumes scattered about the library. As Father Bonaventure was descending the stairway he could be heard to hum to himself the well known rhythm by Brother Thomas á Celano

Sanctitatis nova signa
Prodierunt laude digna
Mira valde et benigna
In Francesco credita.

CHAPTER XII

More about Patrons of Christian Art

The beautiful painting of Steinle's Christmas Grotto was to be placed back of the crib in the hall for the eve of the feast. It would be transferred to a permanent place in the chapel later. Meanwhile it had to be blessed, and Father Bonaventure himself was to do the blessing. Some of the Cathedral fathers came over for the occasion, and the good old friar was soon aroused to talk of his saint. It was a subject of which he was of course full at all times, but Father Martin had aroused the expectations of his visitors by the account given of the friar's previous visit, who, in consequence, became the center of attention in the chaplain's rooms.

"Father Bonaventure," said the chaplain as they were gathered in the sitting room after supper, "how do you explain the singular influence of St. Francis on the Protestant world? I mean, not simply religious-minded men such as we find among Anglicans, or art lovers like

Ruskin, but men who are utterly out of harmony with the religious asceticism represented by St. Francis."

"To-day I came upon Milman, who has this to say on the subject: 'Strange it might appear that the arts, the highest luxuries of religion, should be fostered, cultivated, cherished and distributed by those who professed to reduce Christianity to more than its primitive simplicity, its nakedness of all adornment, its poverty. Strange that these should become the most munificent patrons of art, the most consummate artists; that their cloistered palaces should be the most sumptuous in architecture, and the most richly decorated by sculpture and painting; at once the workshops and the abodes of those who executed most admirably. Assisi, the birth-place of St. Francis, the poor, self-denying wanderer over the face of the earth, who hardly owned the cord which girt him, who possessed not a breviary of his own, who worshipped in the barren mountains, whose companions were the outcasts of human society—Assisi becomes the capital, the young, gorgeous capital of Christian art.'"

"Pardon," interrupted Father Waldon, who was with us at the time, "what volume is that?

Why, Milman's *Christianity!* He is reasoning from historical principles."

"Does not that answer your question?" said Father Bonaventure. "It is a fact that many artists became Franciscans, because in that Order they found the emotions which were to express themselves in art awakened, cherished and strengthened."

"That is precisely what Milman says. Let me read on for a moment: 'The youth who loved the arts came from afar to Assisi, there to gather inspiration and schooling. And in this concourse of the best geniuses a pious rivalry arose, giving an ever fresh impulse to the work that was going on. With noble generosity each left a monument of his achievements at the tomb of St. Francis as a taken of gratitude to him to whom they felt they owed all. Not a church or chapel, not a convent wall or ceiling in that favored city which is not sacred with the touch of some inspired brush. It is one vast academy, containing the noblest creations of human genius and piety; and though age has destroyed much of that which, after all, was but the faint expression of so much that is noble and admirable in the Christian's soul, yet there remains enough to make that single town of

Assisi, even at this day, the choicest collection of purely Christian art.

" 'The disciples of St. Francis, who in his own day could be counted by the thousands, who could be met with in every town and city throughout Italy, and even beyond the Alps and the sea, these perpetuated the spirit of their holy Founder. It is not strange then, that in the face of this new growth of feeling and devotion the old mummy-like images of the Byzantine school were unable any longer to awaken a responsive echo in the soul of the Christian. Painting up to that time had been entirely in the hands of the medieval Greeks. Their stiff, often grotesque forms, conventional coloring and unnatural drapery had nothing in them of the ancient grace of their early masters. The new generation, growing up under the monastic discipline and general influence in all spheres of life of the Friars Minor, missed the freshness, the life, the something with a seraph touch in it at which their own hearts could catch fire. But the young artist, the devout painter who drew the breath of inspiration from the hallowed Grotto of Alvernia, him they understood, and quickly his fame spread, and the builders and the guardians of God's house sought him out,

that he might breathe life into the walls, which were to instruct their people and at the same time fitly enshrine the holy of holies.' "

"Many writers date the beginning of the mystic school of painters from Gentile da Fabriano," interposed one of the priests who was himself something of an artist.

"Perhaps so. Gentile certainly presents a rather marked contrast to the Florentine and Bolognese schools, to which the anything but beneficial patronage of the Medici gave eventually so dangerous a direction that it actually undid much of the work of St. Francis by substituting the love of nature for its own sake in place of that love for God's sake. Other writers place Oderisio at the head of this school, whilst the honor of having been the first at least to abandon the manner of the Greeks is generally accorded to Cimabue. And yet such men as Giunta Pisano, Guido of Siena and others of the same day unquestionably pointed the way to this departure. An old inscription, mentioned by P. Angeli, says of Giunta that he was the first Italian artist ('Juncta Pisanus ruditer a Graecis instructus, Primus ex Italis artem apprehendit circa.—*Ann. Sal.*, 1210').

"It is true that in the works of these early painters there is still a great deal of indecision. It could hardly be otherwise. Art is not in every stage of its life the complete expression of either the spirit or the time that produces it. The soul may be said to be breathed into the rough mass of solid stone in the very conception of the artist, but it wants time to assume shape and form and become the perfect reflection of the original mind. It is in the mature man's face that we trace the peculiar character which is his, developed, indeed, in action, but there in all its peculiarity from the days of his boyhood. Thus these artists served as the connecting link between St. Francis and the most perfect exponents in art of his spirit. They gathered the seed and scattered it about the surrounding mountains and valleys, and it was some time before the new flowers grew up to perfume the air with their sweet odors. As for Giunta, he was certainly under the direct influence of St. Francis. We know that he went to see him at Assisi, where, as we gather from Lanzi, he painted the first known portrait of the saint. Soon after the death of the latter he returned to Assisi, and here has left his best pictures. His paintings in the Church of the Angioli are

far superior to the best efforts of the Byzantine school, both in truth of human expression and in disposition of the drapery. He also directed the paintings that were to honor St. Francis in his church at Pisa, which Cimabue and Giotto, it appears, afterwards completed. These paintings may be less refined, but they are not less expressive than the floating forms of Guido or Murillo."

"How did Cimabue become associated with St. Francis?" asked Father Martin.

"Why, it is doubtful that he ever was so associated. What is known of his early manner strongly betrays the Byzantine style. There is a picture of the saint, and various little legends surrounding it, in the Church of Santa Croce accredited to him, and bearing decided marks of Byzantine training. If it be authentic, which Lanzi doubts, it certainly indicates the direction which his genius took. You know he was a Florentine and Vasari attributes to him what is more probably the work of Duccio. However, it appears that in Pisa he completed an altar-piece for the Sons of St. Francis. After that he went to Assisi. Here, as in the case of Giunta, we find his best pro-

ductions. None of his frescoes gives so good an idea of Cimabue's power as the paintings in the Church of Assisi, though he may not be the author of all which tradition assigns to him there. The evangelists and the doctors of the Church instructing the monks of the Franciscan Order have been executed with an originality of conception and arrangement altogether new in the light of contemporary works.

"Giotto undoubtedly excels him. True to the love that gave birth to his conceptions, he chose for the principal subject of his brush the life of St. Francis. With him at the same fountain drank Dante. As in the days of Pericles, so there existed at this time a close resemblance of spirit between the art of poetry and that of painting. It was natural, then, that there should otherwise exist an intimate friendship between men of similar talent and like aims. Dante seems even at one time to have given his attention to painting under Giotto's guidance. He certainly was master in the art of drawing, and we have it on the authority of Benvenuto da Imola and of Baldinucci, in his Life of Giotto, that the latter painted at Naples from designs drawn for him by Dante. Nor can we

forget Oderisio da Gubbio, who painted with Giotto. Imagine the intercourse of these three men, great souls, inspired by the same noble motives: they pictured, each in his way, yet all with the same grace, the glories of St. Francis. They have likewise immortalized each other. The undoubtedly most correct portrait of Dante which we have is from the hand of Giotto, whose praises in turn, together with those of Oderisio, are chanted in the melodious stanzas of the Divina Commedia."

"Did Giotto paint outside of Umbria?"

"Why, yes. Like St. Francis in the zeal that roused him to spread his newly-learned gospel, he travelled to nearly all the larger cities of Italy, from Naples to Lombardy, and beyond."

Here one of the Fathers stopped the flow of our friar's enthusiasm for a moment by pointing to a copy of Fra Angelico's angels over the desk in the room:

"But what of him? He was not a Franciscan. Did he owe his perfection to St. Francis?"

"I think he did," replied Father Bonaventure, perhaps taken a little by surprise. "It is admitted on all hands that Fra Angelico studied Giotto's manner of painting with great

assiduity. These very angels—and in these he excels—are imitations of the great master-disciple of Assisi, with only the difference that Angelico applied purer colors. This fact alone might be sufficient to convince us that the genius which St. Francis had diffused about him must likewise have touched the young Dominican. We have seen how the flame that issued from the seraphic patriarch had laid its hold even on St. Dominic, in spite of his totally different genius; how he had sought out St. Francis, sat at his feet to listen to his tales of divine love, and eagerly asked permission to be present at the general chapter of the Friars Minor. He wished to learn from men who had no other school than that of charity, no training but that of unlimited obedience in executing works of love, no doctrine but that of Christian poverty and humility. Whilst his was the lofty intellect appointed by God to gather the straying minds, to confound the heresy of the Albigenses, to crush the serpent's head of a false philosophy, St. Francis was the heart overflowing with affectionate sympathy for his fallen brethren, at war with one another, and without peace in themselves. To him had been given the giant task to stay the tide of the lust of the eyes, the

passions of the flesh, and to counteract the false asceticism which had taken form in the vagaries of the Waldenses. Yet if we may be permitted to judge the comparative strength of two such giants, so different in parts yet exercising a mutual attraction toward each other, we should incline to call St. Francis the stronger."

"You speak of this difference and at the same time of a likeness in St. Francis and Fra Angelico. Whence does the likeness come, since the Florentine disciple of St. Dominic could have had no intercourse with the Franciscan?"

"The similarity of genius may have arisen partly from the native simplicity of both, partly from local association. The beautiful valley between Foligno and Assisi, where St. Francis lay entombed with his daughter in Christ, St. Clare, had numerous sanctuaries which sheltered the masterpieces of Franciscan art to which Fra Angelico must have gone, or did go in fact, as we read in his life, to kindle his devotion and animate his genius. Both were one with him; the handling of his brush was but a prayer of the uplifted soul in contemplation. Looking at his own pictures, and there are comparatively few that remain, we find St. Francis

introduced wherever the unity in the conception of his subject permitted it. In almost all his most remarkable pictures of the Blessed Virgin the seraphic saint figures prominently."

"What of Benozzo Gozzoli, the disciple of Fra Angelico? I remember his pictures in the Franciscan church at Montefalco. In painting the portrait of St. Francis he seemed to have simply reproduced the pictures at San Marco."

"Yes, he is another genius who dotes on St. Francis. His frescoes at Pisa, painted in the decline of his years, are simply marvels of what has been called the patriarchal style of Christian art.

"One might go on recounting painters, not only such as nourished their talents with the spirit communicated to them by men who had stood in direct relation to the saint and his Order, but such also as regarded St. Francis as their only master; artists who flocked to the place of his birth, to the principal scene of his activity which is now his earthly resting-place, as if to invoke the aid of his spirit where they could be nearest to his remains—Pinturicchio and Perugino, whose art was so exquisite that it seemed altogether new: ('perdita si fuerat pingendi hic retulit artem; si nusquam inventa

est, hactenus ipse dedit,' reads an old inscription cited by Orsini); Francia also, friend and rival of Raphael, with Giacomo his son and Giuglio his relative, who sought shelter even in death in the Church of St. Francis, where they are buried. Raphael himself, in his earlier works, has acknowledged the tribute he owed to St. Francis. And when the Renaissance had given a new turn to art, even then Assisi was the one place where the best men sought inspiration, and St. Francis still remained the subject and his glory the object of their labors. There was always enough to allure the artist to that singular spot, independent of the devout memory he might entertain of the saint. The eleven or twelve communities of Franciscans, in devout procession moving to the tomb of the saint, their solemn chants, above all, the stirring harmonies of the patriarchal choir famous by the traditions of several ages, would attune the soul to the right appreciation of those marvellous frescoes that adorn the walls. Wherever the eye turns, from chancel to choir, naves, wall, and dome, even the mosaic floors, are wrought by the hands of the Umbrian masters. Nay, the streets of the city itself are full of devout representations in painting, many of

rare artistic merit, all breathing the love and spirit of St. Francis."

"Do you think," queried someone, "that architecture owes much to St. Francis?"

"Yes, undoubtedly," said Father Bonaventure. "The architectural structure of the Grand Basilica in Assisi expresses perfectly the idea of the life of St. Francis. The Abbé Riche, in his *Fioretti,* speaks of it as a wonderful monument which he is unable to explain in any other way than as a new inspiration of religious art, as though it were a heavenly revelation."

"That would be the expression of the Gothic element, as distinct from the Roman and Basilican styles?"

"Assuredly. Roman architecture, such as it existed before this time, expressed on the whole the idea of rest, of strength. It was, as such, typical of the Christian faith and the security which it had begotten.

"But Gothic architecture represented, so to say, a new feeling, that of movement, of striving upward. Its long, slender columns supporting the pointed arch seemed to end in heaven; all pointed to the infinite that awaits man. But we see much more than this in the temple which enshrines the remains of St. Francis. There are

here two churches—we might say, three—one within the other. In them we have the twofold aspect of his life. His penitence, with its train of voluntary poverty, sacrifices, and suffering resignation, symbolized in the tomb of the saint, who lies there on the ground as he had desired to die, poor, with barely a shroud to cover him; and his monument, the little church of Portiuncula, built with his own hand and still untouched as he had left it. And high above it there tower in noble proportion the marble columns and Gothic dome, speaking to the beholder without his asking for the meaning of the symbol, of glorious and immortal transfiguration. Whilst the inner edifice, with its leaning partitions and pendants, suggests the idea of humility, associated with the sentiment of plaintive, childlike hope which is at once full of diffidence in self and of trust in the strength on which it leans; the other expresses a freedom and joy which knows no limits and no bounds, rising higher and higher until it touches immortality. It was a beautiful but difficult thought to express. Nowhere has it been more successfully done than in this epic in stone at Assisi."

"Well, Father Bonaventure, you have con-

vinced me, for one, that St. Francis was a genius, and so are you. But that cannot be said of all the Franciscans. Some of them have abominable taste, you will allow."

Father Bonaventure ignored the taunt, and summed up the discussion by saying:

"Wherever the Sons of St. Francis went, whatever the name or garb, or particular rule under which they perpetuated throughout long ages his teaching and his spirit, everywhere we see traces of that same enthusiasm for the arts. The convents and the churches of the monks became the treasure-houses and nurseries of painting and sculpture. Raphael, Guido Reni, Domenichino gave them the best of their pencils in Rome. The Church of St. Francis at Rimini became one of the wonders of the age, for here worked, next to Giotto, his most illustrious disciples, and Giorgio da Rimini, who loved to call himself Giorgio Francesco. But it is time we conclude our talk."

The friar had made his company realize what the love of God in a single individual is able to effect for the benefit of succeeding generations. Art is certainly a valuable element in the production of human happiness, and the very eagerness with which even its shadow and its counter-

feit are sought, stands in confirmation of this truth. May we not hope for a chaster growth of true and elevated taste from the intercession of St. Francis? Leo XIII, in commending devotion to the saint saw in it a powerful means of counteracting the existing evils of modern society.

CHAPTER XIII

The Theology of the Sisters' Garden

Father Martin's explanations about the pigeons had been largely discussed by the Sisters at their succeeding evening recreations. As a result, his visits to the garden, where he frequently went to recite his breviary or do some leisurely reading, became occasions for the nuns to gather about and ply him with questions. He had a way of explaining natural phenomena as symbols of philosophy, or better of religion, which made their study, and particularly that of the science of nature, physics, botany, animal life and such like, interesting to both teachers and pupils. His theory was that in all the beautiful things created by God we could trace His image, and consequently the image of man made to His likeness. That likeness is found in the perfections which were the gift of our first parents, and to which it is the aim of religion to restore us. Among the nuns

were some finely-cultured women who had a knowledge of the sciences, and a classical training enabling them to enter with intelligence, and at times with enthusiasm, into the explanations of the chaplain, which less educated persons might have found pedantic or extravagant.

Thus he would pluck some fine specimen of the gladiolus, among the flowers which the gardener brought from the hothouse for the decorations of the altar, hold it up and say:

"There you have a perfect image of the Christian, or, if you will, of the religious. See the number three, symbol of divine perfection—represented in the calyx. The upper petals (three) of the perianth are large, fully developed, as if to extol the emblem of God's Trinity of Persons. Below, are three smaller, corresponding petals, lesser images of the Divine Trinity, representing the likeness of man to his Creator. The color of the flower reflects the particular quality of the perfection in God and His image. In the present case it is red, the token of love or charity; but each color speaks of some distinct perfection in God. Thus, white is the emblem of purity and simplicity; blue, of mercy; purple, which is a blending of red and blue, is the charity of sacrifice as expressed

in the Incarnation; yellow, the color of gold, is power symbolic of true faith and of generosity; green, the longanimity that gives hope. These are all but variations of the white ray of light, as in the solar spectrum or the rainbow, which distribute the pure Light of the World refracted through the baptismal waters so as to speak to man of God's infinite Beauty.

"But there is more. The gladiolus flower, apart from the hybrid specimens which are cultivated by horticulturists, is an admirable image of religious perfection. It bears in its heart, that is the interior of the chalice, three white stamina and a pistil. These may be likened to the three religious vows—poverty, chastity and obedience. They are white, as you notice, indicative of purity of intention. And whilst they arise out of a pale white ground (the heart of the calyx) they bear on their tops each a purple crown. The crown is suggestive of penance, purple being a mixture of blue, the color of heaven, and red—which means blood or fire, or both—the two standing for sacrifice whose smoke rises like incense to heaven. The pistil bears the pollen, that is to say, it represents the industry or use of individual gifts from which fruit is born which mul-

tiplies the blessings and beauty of the flower, since from it springs the new growth.

"Now the stalk, you notice, on which the flower grows, is without foliage, such as you see, for instance, in the rosebush. It denotes the simplicity and absence of vanity or pretension out of which religious perfection develops. What stands in place of leaves is a blade, sword-shaped, with the point upward, as if to say: 'The beauty of my flowering rises from a straight upward striving trunk guarded by the sword of self-denial.' In fact, the word *gladiolus,* as you are no doubt aware, means 'little sword.' It stands for that weapon which Our Lord commends to us when He says, 'I came not to bring peace but the sword.—The Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence and only those who use violence can bear it away.' "

The nuns were pleased. They had something to remind themselves of their heavenward aims as flowers in the "enclosed garden" of their Divine Spouse. It would be entertaining, too, and instructive for the children, and might develop dormant vocations in them to the religious life.

"And do other flowers lend themselves as

readily to such symbolism of religious life as the gladiolus, or did you pick it out just for that likeness?" asked the Reverend Mother.

"I think you will, on close observation, find God as readily in all His works as in that lily flower. It demands a little thought and knowledge of plant construction, though the saints—men like St. Francis of Assisi, or little Teresa of the Child Jesus—had a natural talent or instinct in discovering the secrets of God's image in nature, because they were familiar with the Divine likeness and could recognize it as spontaneously as we recognize the handwriting or work of a familiar friend. I believe that children as a rule, while unspoiled by artificial contrivances and false standards of beauty, see these things—I mean God's image—in His creation much more readily than we who have the sensitized plates of our imagination and consciousness soiled and marred by the constant use of material contrivances that minister to our comforts."

"Do children realize this gift, do you think, Father?"

"Oh, no; they are not self-conscious, as older people become by reflection on themselves. They do not analyze what they see. But they

feel, and hence appreciate the beautiful things of nature much better than grown folk, and get more real joy out of them. We all can recall impressions of childhood in which the memory of the simplest things, such as flowers, or stars in the heavens, bring deep longings of a vague but real happiness not to be compared to that of subsequent pleasures. It has always seemed to me of great importance, in teaching children, that we should realize this, and hence take every possible care to have them kept from artificial pleasures so long as enjoyments of nature are open to them."

"But is this possible amid our civilized conditions, which surround us on all sides with mechanism and contrivances to please or excite unnatural tastes?"

"It may be difficult, in a way, to close the eyes of the child entirely to artificial incentives of pleasure, so long as it lives in surroundings where these are the rule. Still I believe that nature study is not only always possible but is always preferred by children if you leave it to their choice. The point of importance is that they be taught early to see God in nature. That can never disappoint them, while it gives them a sound and high standard of comparison."

It was early spring, and Father Martin found peculiar pleasure in watching the returning life-throbs of Nature's heart after the winter coma. Back of the Convent was a wooded edge where birds and squirrels would riot unmolested, to the delight of the children. Here the chaplain, who had by this time became a familiar figure on the grounds, might be seen peering among the shrubs examining specimens of plant life, or sometimes of bugs and insects which he carried with him to his rooms. The nuns and senior students often stopped him to ask questions, for he was supposed to know "a whole lot" more than even Mother Irene, who had taken a degree and taught the nobility in France before she ever entered the Convent.

One evening he was returning with a handful of tiny shrubs in bloom, the first probably of the season.

"Oh, trailing arbutus," exclaimed a Sister who met him. "Where could you have found it as early as this? The children must have missed it, for they are usually on the hunt for the flower at its first appearance. What a delicate little blossom it is, and yet such a delicious fragrance!"

"I discovered these hiding under the moss

near the spring house. It is their way. Frequently they are out of the ground before the last snow appears. Arbutus is a timid flower like the mimosa, despite its native hardiness."

"The children call it 'Virgin blushes.' "

"I did not know that it was called by that name; it seems quite appropriate," said the chaplain.

"We first got it from Miss Eliza Allen Starr, who was here last year. When the children brought their store of arbutus for the decoration of Our Lady's altar she was so delighted that she wrote some verses for them, in which she called the flower by that name."

As they passed the chapel two of the elder pupils met them.

"Madeline, come here. You recited Miss Starr's 'Trailing Arbutus' last year for the May festival. Doesn't she call the flower 'Virgin blushes?' "

"Yes, Mother."

"Do you remember the verses? Perhaps the Father would like to hear them."

Father Martin was pleased when the girl, with a fine clear intonation, after some hesitation, began to recite the lines, which picture in dramatic fashion a group of young village

maidens seeking the arbutus flower and bringing it in procession as an offering to the Madonna's shrine.

Along the pinewood's sunny edge,
While snowbanks linger in their shade,
A flower peeps blushing from the hedge
Its hardy leaves through winter made.

And while the vernal air is cool,
Before the wild bee dares to roam,
Lightfooted maidens hie from school
To greet it in its sylvan home.

Tall pines their faded needles cast,
Ground-evergreens spread verdant snares,
And ferns and moss are matted fast
Where nature this choice vestal bears.

The maidens eager for the bloom
In cloistered beauty dwelling there,
Follow the scent of chaste perfume
Which tells its secret to the air.

And when the clustered buds they see
In modest innocence aflush
What wonder if in girlish glee
They call this flower the Virgin's blush.

She stopped.

"There is more, Madeleine; go on," urged the nun.

In altered measure the girl continued:

Watch the maidens turning slowly
From the hill-top two by two
Bearing with a joy most lowly
Gifts for Mary, Virgin holy
Fresh with April dew.

Village maidens lithe and fair,
Light as though they tread on air,
Seem from cloud to cloud descending
While along the hillside wending.

Hark! I hear them singing,
Chanting on their way,
Mary's virtues hymning
On the eve of May.

See them enter yonder dell;
Under shady hemlocks' sway,—
Hush,—the chorus dies away,
And there sounds the single note
From a fresh young warbler's throat,
Until joining voices swell
The sweet hymnal, as in rank
On the river's winding bank
Step by step with virgin grace
To each cadence keeping pace
On they move with grave delight,
Bearing banners blue and white.
Now they reach the chapel door,
Cross the threshold's marble stone,

Then kneel gently, one by one,
Jesus' presence to adore.
Next their fragrant offerings lay
Gathered for the Queen of May,
Baskets plaited from green rushes
Filled with her own "virgin blushes."

"That is beautiful! It should be set to music."

"So we thought also. It is a charming bit of processional melody, and I fancy Miss Starr must have intended it for that. The variations of rhythm are well suited to the changes of light marching step. Even the alterations in measure add zest to the spirit of a religious procession."

"Yes, I quite agree with you," said the chaplain, as he smiled his thanks to the young girl, and bade them goodnight.

At the chaplain's next visit to the Convent Garden, Sister Irene met him. She evidently had been waiting for an opportunity to speak to him.

"We made the experiment of explaining to some of the children the beauty of God's handiwork in the flower of the gladiolus which you had shown us. I fear as a result we are in for difficulties. You know how inquisitive these young minds are. Having told them that God's

image is reflected in His creation and that, if we look for it, we may find it in any or all of His works, I have had several of them come up to me already, bringing a flower culled at random and asking: 'Mother, what does this mean? Where is God's image in this?'—and so on. I fear you will have to give us a course of instruction on the meaning of things on these grounds, so as to satisfy the curiosity aroused by your own initiative."

"As to that," replied Father Martin, "there is, I think, no great difficulty. Some fundamental notions in symbolism, indicated by forms and by colors, will supply ready terms of comparison from which, by a dexterous use of imagery, one can draw apt lessons in religious or moral truth. Let me give you an illustration of what I mean.

"Everywhere in nature you meet combinations of numbers. The meaning of these is easily mastered. Thus *one,* as the symbol of unity, naturally stands for God. To this unity all other numbers constituting variety can be referred. Beauty has been defined by the Scholastics as unity in variety and variety in unity. Hence all things arranged in order, under various groupings, produce the impression

of unity and express the Divine Beauty. The arranging is done by the reason or the intelligence. It is out of this order in nature, which argues for the existence of a supreme intelligence, that Aristotle drew his demonstration for the necessary existence of God. Wherever we see order, he reasoned, we conclude to an intellect as the immediate cause of it. Accidents don't create consistent order; there must be a mind back of it. Now, since the universe manifests a consistently recurring cycle of causes and effects, we must conclude that there is a first cause or an eternal intellect at the origin of nature."

"I see. That is not, of course, the only argument for the existence of God drawn from reason?"

"No, certainly not. Plato, the teacher of Aristotle, had quite a different theory. He appealed not so much to the intelligence as to the native feeling in man which makes him long for happiness. This thirst or desire for happiness of which the heart is the ordinary repository, is boundless and seeks the infinite. Nothing on earth or within reach of the outward senses can satisfy it; not even intelligence, or knowledge, or wisdom. The more we know, the more we

crave for new lights; and there are no limits to the desires of the heart. This longing, this void in the creature, must, as Plato reasoned, have an answer, a fulfilment in that which is infinite, namely the enjoyment of God as the Absolute Beauty and Power.

"But to return to the symbolism of numbers. *One* is unity in which all other things meet or whence all other things proceed, as light and heat, and color and power of growth are but the reflected beauty and motion coming from the sun, which materialistic pagan minds for that very reason were tempted to deify.

"*Two* is the symbol of altruism, charity, friendship, brotherhood and sisterhood, the marriage bond, and by extension to abstract notions, of confidence, mutual love and all those qualities which relate to charity or natural alliance. It takes two to create friendship, to exercise the virtue of charity, to teach a truth. Our Lord sends His disciples two by two to preach His kingdom, which was to be illustrated by the lesson of charity.

"*Three* stands for perfection generally. It originates, no doubt, in the fact of the Divine Trinity of Persons, whose image man, by reason of his distinctive faculties, reflects in a spe-

cial manner. *Omne trinum perfectum* is an old adage, as also *tres faciunt collegium.* It was the rule that determined the obligation of masters at the old universities to lecture when there was question of numbers attending a schola. The underlying sense derives, however, from the triune personality of God as Absolute Perfection. It also has the meaning of Beauty, since divine perfection is the norm of all that is truly beautiful or virtuous.

"The number *four* suggests the square with its four sides, as the emblem of material or physical perfection. It rests on the line whichever way you turn it, as if to signify that its basis is earthly ground.

"In the symbol of *five* we have the human perfection of the five senses. Hence the number stands for man and his external qualities as indicated by the use of his bodily faculties.

"Out of these numbers you obtain diverse combinations, each having their special significance. Thus their doubling implies fulness of the respective qualities indicated by them singly. They may also be added one to the other, or one multiplied by the other, to signify combined gifts or multiplied richness of possession.

"Take the number *seven*. It adds to divine perfection the material or physical perfection of outward signs, as is well illustrated in the sevenfold action of the Holy Ghost, in His gifts to man, or in the Seven Sacraments which are Divine grace communicated by physical or external signs. Here you have three, the Divine perfection, and four, the material sign. These in turn are meant to furnish remedies for, or counteract, the sevenfold privation of Divine grace in human nature, as indicated by the seven deadly sins."

The Sister had listened attentively and caught the full significance of what Father Martin said. He explained to her, however, that this sort of symbolism, while sanctioned by the usage of peoples, especially in the Eastern countries at all times, was only in part based on native conceptions of the images used. Much of it was conventional, just as in modern usage the letter *X* stands for an unknown quantity or is a sign of multiplication.

"It is chiefly such symbols, represented by numbers, shapes and colors, that serve in the teaching of religious truth. You find it all through Scripture, as well as in the Eastern hieroglyphs and the legends of the ancients gen-

erally. For example, Job's three daughters and seven sons, like the numbers of his cattle, the number of days during which his friends sat in silence, are all figures of speech implying what might be expressed in more accurate terms if primitive language had allowed it. Modern tongues have thousands of words for details and qualities of things which did not exist among the ancients, or for which they used common terms or conventional signs in writing."

"What do the three daughters and seven sons mean in Job?"

"Perfect children, or beautiful daughters and gifted or strong sons, as the former excel in grace and comeliness the reflection of Divine Beauty, while virility calls for a combination of heavenly wisdom (three) and physical valor or strength (four). By a similar adaptation to time, the number seven is used to express a period during which the friends of Job mourned with him in silence as a time under God's providence during which they could not converse with him, though witnesses of his suffering. The phrase would more intelligibly be translated by stating that they waited in silence on him until such time as appeared, under God's design (three), to call for an expression of their

personal or human sentiments (four). In other words, they found Job in a condition of affliction which did not at once permit exchange of thought such as is shown in their subsequent discussion concerning his sufferings."

"I am greatly obliged to you, Father, for these lights. They are very helpful. But you must let us have more of your knowledge on the subject when we are all together."

With the coming of May the grounds about St. Catherine's began to assume an aspect of fresh and chaste cheerfulness such as spring imparts when it dons its festive robe for the flower season. It is a remarkable fact that May flowers are for the most part white. As if to honor in an especial manner the Immaculata, our heavenly Father spreads nature's green carpet and then studs it with white blossoms of the lily, the dogwood, magnolia, and the early blossoms of the countless fruit trees. Here and there nature adds a touch of color-gold by the dandelion, or a faint blush of crimson life. But the first impression is of a bridal bower, with delicate festooning indicating virginal sway of unstained youth.

Unlike the arbutus or lily of the valley, which

hold their fragrance under ferns or neath the down-turned cups of tiny bells, the honeysuckle runs riot upward and along the open hedge among green leaves in double pairs. Small though its flower, golden or white, symbol of generosity and purity of heart, it proves its worth by the sweet odor it sends forth, wafted along the paths and byways far and wide and where the honeybee seeks and finds sweetest store for man's delight. It became the subject of inquiry from one of the children in this way:

"Father, Sister Madeleine wants us to write a composition on the honeysuckle," modestly spoke up little Dorothy after she had lingered for some time near the seat occupied by Father Martin under the grapevine arbor where he had been reading his breviary. Dorothy was a favorite of the Father, and of the house generally. She combined a marked and shy demureness of manner with a vivacity and apparently hoydenish frankness which puzzled her teachers. For the rest she was possessed of unusual intelligence for a child of her age, and was also very industrious.

"Well, don't you know the honeysuckle, Dorothy?" plied Father Martin. "What's the trouble?"

"I know the honeysuckle, and I have read lots of poems about it in the Anthology. But this is to be a prize-essay and will be taken for merit marks in our June examinations. Sister said that what counts is not only correct grammar and selections from the poets, but originality. I don't see much originality in the honeysuckle, and all the other girls can find the poetry in the library Index."

"Go and get me a spray of the honeysuckle, if you can, and I'll see if we cannot find something original in it that is not in the Anthology."

Off she skipped and shortly returned with some of the blossoms.

"Look at the little flower—its shape. What do you think it is like?"

"A tennis bat."

"Oh, no. I mean the open, full-blown blossom, not the undeveloped pod. Suppose I were to say that it is like your hand—can you see any resemblance?"

"Yes, there are four fingers, and the thumb opposite them."

"Good. Now, do you notice that there are always two such small hands together on the stalk, generally protected by the green leaves

below them? Well, the children in Italy call the flower the little hands of Our Lady, meaning Our Blessed Mother."

"Why?"

"Because, first of all, they are white, which means pure. Secondly, because they hold precious things in their hollows, or palms."

"What things?"

"Six slender white threads with pollen cases on top. These are like the fruits which Our Lady dispenses through her hands from her Immaculate Heart which is the tabernacle of the Holy Ghost. Now, what are the fruits of the Holy Ghost:

"Charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, long-suffering, mildness, faith, modesty, continency, chastity."

"But the fruits of the Holy Ghost are twelve!"

"Six in each hand makes twelve."

"And the flowers are not all white; some are yellow."

"Yes, that signifies generosity—the color of gold as a gift from the hand. The hands are pure and generous."

Dorothy was greatly pleased.

"You say, Father, that the Italian children

call the flower the little hands of Our Lady. What do they say? I am studying Italian, you know, for the music."

"*Le manine della Madonna,*" replied the Father. In the heraldry of flowers it is used as a token of generosity and also of childlike affection, because there are always two hands, sometimes both white; sometimes both golden yellow; and sometimes one of each. And they spend their fruits and fragrance quite freely to make others happy. They are always supported by a couplet of green leaves, you will notice, as if they rested or leaned on charity.

"Yes, and they are bound together by branches that trail all over the whole hedge, which might mean that they are bound together like the bands of friends.

"Now, Dorothy, do you think you could write an original composition on the honeysuckle?"

"I shall try. I think I could if you won't tell the other girls what you told me.—But that wouldn't be fair, would it?"

"Well, I won't tell anybody until you have finished your essay. You can say that you have heard it, you know, which would be as good as if you had read it in a book, and that will be all right."

"Father, you are lovely!"

Dorothy won the prize, which was a gold cross. She came to Father Martin the morning after Commencement Day and asked him to accept it, with some verses from her, as a keepsake. She didn't believe she had a right to it, though he had said so; and perhaps he would attach it to his watchguard, as the priest at home did have one almost like it.

CHAPTER XIV

Symbolism of Flowers

The vacation months gave opportunity to Father Martin for pursuing his favorite studies in the outside world of nature. The children were away, with the exception of a few privileged boarders, and the nuns found recreation in attending lectures of a summer school arranged by the Superior to supplement the courses of pedagogics for the teachers. The most enjoyable of these instructions were the informal talks given by the chaplain under the trees of the woods which skirted the Convent gardens. They were partly Scriptural and partly within the province of symbolism to which the interpretation of plant life had given occasion in his previous talks to the nuns and to the children.

Sometimes he took his text from the Roman Ritual, or again from the Offices recited by the nuns as part of the Canonical Rule. In this

way he pictured the religious life as an anticipation of Paradise where the joys of our First Parents before the fall are revived in the contemplation of God's works. The beautiful antiphons echoing the answer to the daily prayer recited in chapel after Communion: "Call me when my life shall fail me," make the angels lead the departed soul into the heavenly garden where there is endless and pure enjoyment,

In Paradisum deducant te Angeli.[1]

or again as the priest prays by the side of the dead for the soul on its way to eternity:

Eam introducere digneris ad semper virentia et amoena loca Paradisi.[2]

Again he would take up some prophetic passage, such as that of Isaias (xi) cited in the Votive Mass of Our Lady, likening her to the flower of the tree of Jesse, from which is to spring forth the fruit on which would rest the Spirit of the Lord,—"the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and fortitude, of knowledge and holiness and of the Spirit of the Lord."

[1] May the angels lead thee into Paradise.

[2] Deign to lead her into the ever blooming and beautiful garden of Paradise.

The Convent library had some curious old MSS. in the form of antiphonaries written on parchment and illuminated by the hand of mediaeval monks or nuns. These gave occasion for frequent references, questionings and explanations. They often happily illustrated the symbolical or figurative allusions made by the Christian Fathers or the poets of the Middle Ages. Thus a copy of a Breviarium of the Abbess of the Monastery *de la Trinité* at Poitiers, a Lady Anne de Prie, showed as a title-piece the tree of Jesse with seven doves nestling in its branches, these being evidently figures of the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost just alluded to. Under it was the somewhat irregular hexametric legend:

Inclita stirps Jesse virgam protulit amenam
De qua processit flos miro plenus odore
Haec est Virga Dei Mater, flos ortus ab illa.

Another parchment folio had the Little Hours taken from an Horarium of Anne de Bretagne, in which the illuminated initials presented a series of flowers with their names, and on the last page the verse from the Canticle of the Three Children:

Benedicite universa germinantia in terra.

Here the Rod of Jesse was designated in one place as the Tree of Life and in another as the Tree of Knowledge. The cedar was pictured as emblematic of Our Blessed Lady, who elsewhere is compared to the plane tree (Platana), and again to the olive and to the palm. Thus special virtues of the Virgin Mother of Christ, such as freedom from decay, fulness of grace, source of peace, and loftiness of grace, are reflected in the characteristic qualities of the four plants as they commonly occur in Oriental imagery. Similarly, the cypress and yew tree stand for immortality—*Maria assumpta in coelum,* Our Lady undecaying, taken to heaven.

"But the palm, which here, by reason of its gracefulness, is designated as bespeaking the fulness of grace in the Madonna, also belongs to her as Queen of Martyrs. It signifies the badge of martyrdom."

"Why, Father?"

"Because the victorious heroes returning from conquest were decorated with laurel crowns, and branches of palms were given them by their sovereigns. In like manner those who had gained the victory of faith by death became known through the token of laurel wreath and the branch of palm. It was a distinction which

marked them above the princes of earth, who might wear jeweled diadems and sceptres but could not claim such badges simply by right of sovereignty or rank."

"Did not the oaken-leaved wreath also symbolize victory?"

"The oak was a symbol not so much of victory as of strength, and hence was used to crown the champions in the Olympic games or races. You find it occasionally as an attribute of strength in pictures of St. Louis of France and other royal saints.

"Sometimes the oak is merely used to give symbolical meaning to the ivy, the clinging plant of which it is the support. The latter is the twofold image of dependence and of lasting allegiance, as Scott pictures it:

> The Oak has fallen—
> And the young ivy bush which learnt to climb
> By its support must needs partake its fall."

Someone here recalled the lines of Bernard Burton to Mrs. Hemans on the ivy as beautifully portraying the qualities of true friendship amid all seasons:

> It changes not as seasons flow
> In fitful silent course along.

Spring finds it verdant, leaves it so;
It outlives summer's song.
Autumn no wan nor russet stain
Upon its fadeless glory flings,
And winter o'er it sweeps in vain
With tempest on its wings.

"Here, Father, is a picture of St. Rita of Cascia under a tree and with some fruits in her lap. What can be the meaning?"

"Fruits in general," said Father Martin, "are the symbol of charity or good works, though, as in pictures of St. Elizabeth, Christian art makes use of the rose to express works of mercy. Latin artists distinguish between the rose as symbol of the virtue of charity or love, and fruits as the token of corporal works of mercy. However, in the case of St. Rita I believe the tree and fruit are meant to designate the fig tree as symbol of temptations which *La Santa de los impossibiles* succeeded in overcoming.

"Another symbol in Christian art that stands for temptation is the apple or the apple-blossom. In pagan ikonography this symbol has the meaning of discord, or also of wisdom, owing to the old legend of Perseus.

"The sheaf of corn and the grape as illus-

trating the sacrament of the Blessed Eucharist are, of course, well known."

It was the study of flowers, however, which caused endless inquiry and interest among the nuns, whom the chaplain had once called "miscellaneous bulbs in God's truck patch," by way of correcting the Bishop who had preached at a reception and alluded to them as lilies in the enclosed Garden of Christ.

They knew of course all about lilies, their beautiful chalices, which were the hearts of religious and, like their guimps and coifs, mostly white, with golden-headed stamina and pistils, signfying virtuous deeds and the sweet fragrance of devotion that rises to heaven continually from the morning meditation to evening prayers and all the good intentions of things to be done, especially while they are asleep.

Father Martin in his quiet humorous way called the attention of the religious to sundry peculiarities of the lily that were apt to be overlooked in the contemplation of their beautiful habits as they stood in gilded pots on the altar. One of the things he emphasized was that the lily kept its head down steadily, as if it were not a bit self-conscious or inquisitive, like, for

instance, the rose, which puts its beautiful face into all kinds of corners, its head mostly uplifted, and dangling and swaying with every gust that came from the open window of the sacristy. The lily bends as though in reverence, and quietly wafts its odors aloft without seeming to do so. Then it is a sort of solitary plant, though always in good company; that is to say, it grows on a simple stalk, no flourishings and multitude of foliage hiding thorns and pricking branchlets. It is just upright, keeping to a sort of straight rule, but always humbly inclined as if it did not look for any special attention, like the rose amid its green surroundings.

"Of course there are lilies that are not white, though they are also beautiful—the tiger lily, the Turkish varieties, with dark spots and bright gaudy red or yellow petals. They lack the sweet and pleasant aroma of the Annunciation lily and grow mostly in swamps. Sometimes they get into Convent gardens by being blown in during the autumn season, when the pollen is wafted over the meadows to find good soil anywhere. Then they grow until the gardener weeds them out as being out of harmony with the virgin beauty of his flowerbeds.

"Of the lily family there are any number,

varying in size, form of growth and color. One of these is the *hyacinth,* a hardy plant of fine fragrance and a figure of religious community life."

"How?"

"First of all it grows in clusters of small lily flowers, rising straight on a single stalk, which signifies that it is bound upward to a common purpose. Like its sisters of the white lily tribe, the cups or calyxes bend humbly sidewise but in regular order, making a community. While the individual flowers are smaller, as if realizing their subjection to a common rule, they all keep their ranks as if by mutual consent to glorify God.

"Thus the community of lilies making up the hyacinth wafts its fragrance in union to heaven —the odor of prayer and holy living.

"Despite the number of many little lilies making up each cluster of the hyacinth, their service to God is done in perfect sacred silence.

"Furthermore, the hyacinth, like nearly all the lily tribe, grows without show of foliage, the single leaves being of the sword shape, sheathing the stalk, thus protecting the flower from noxious vermin that might creep up from below.

"Finally, whereas other plants not of the

lily family spread out in numerous tendrils, the hyacinth has its root in a bulb that has a compact and solid radical constitution as its basis, keeping under the ground. This makes it a symbol of lowly poverty by which all other virtues are fostered.

"You see then in the hyacinth a quite complete image of common religious observance.

"As it adopts different colors—white, purple, red, or blue, it may be said to represent by its external habit, the different orders. A remarkable quality, too, of the little lily group, is that it is singularly hardy, will stand almost any temperature, and may be kept blooming behind frost-covered windows even through the winter season.

"In the Greek language the word *hyacinth* stands for the idea of the beautiful in general, and old pagan myths represent it as a flower that has sprung from the blood of a favorite child of the gods, suggesting a prophetic echo of the Incarnation, such as is found in many pagan legends, probably derived, though misinterpreted, from the ancient inspired books."

On another occasion Father Martin took a branchlet of the *hydrangea.*

"What do you think of this religious family?" he asked one of the nuns. She hesitated, for there was nothing of the lily shape about the flower.

"Blues—of the Immaculate Heart?" she said with some diffidence, for the tiny petals of the blossoms closely resembled the shape of a heart, and were of a shade of blue.

"Very nearly indeed," replied the Father. "You see, there are four of these little hearts to each single flower. The number four is a symbol of completeness in the physical or material order. Thus each flower seems to say: 'We perfectly agree in hearts.' Sometimes you find a flower of the hydrangea with five hearts, or even six. That is an unusual combination, in which one is generally smaller than the rest, though not superfluous so long as it enhances the beauty and combines in community. They, moreover, conform to the Immaculate Heart of Mary as shown in their adopting for their habit white and blue, which are the colors of the Madonna. If you look closely into the heart and face of the small blossom you find a gradation of the hue, from white to deeper color, either turning outward from the centre to the margin, or the reverse. In either case, the

change leads to purity, while the heart of the blossom bears golden seeds. But what is best of all, these orderly disposed little flowers combine with each other into a perfect round, as if to indicate their common purpose of life which is to make of the multitude of small blossoms one large flower to delight the eye and heart of the Creator. The grand cluster of the hydrangea thus presents a picture of perfect community life from hearts that take the form and color-tone of the Virgin Mother of Christ."

"How—when the hydrangea is of a purplish or bright red color?"

"Why, that would mean a specially fervent community, in which the hearts of the individuals have grown holier in love and show it by their blushing or burning hue."

"Some of the blossoms seem to be green—the smaller ones."

"Oh, yes; they are the novices. Of course they are green, always, until they grow. One thing more, which I almost forgot," added the chaplain before the community dispersed:

"You call this flower *hydrangea.* That means originally water-fed, and suggests the virtue of abstemiousness. These flowers are all white-ribbon ladies, temperance advocates, and in that

they imitate Our Lady also, who, though she prayed for the making of wine at the nuptials in Cana, was of the Nazarene order, as tradition has it, and hence preserved abstinence as she observed virginity."

While not every flower fulfilled the expectation of the nuns, who now began to look for photographs of themselves among the flower-beds, in the shrubbery, and in the gardener's conservatory, the Father had manifold occasions to explain the symbolism of the beautiful evidences of God's love in the plant creation about them. In this way they put it down in notebooks (for the use of instruction and discussion in the children's classes later on) that:

The Pansy meant meditation.

The Violet, humility.

The Syringa, brotherly or sisterly love—which pleased the Philadelphians, especially when told that the botanical name for the little flower was 'Philadelphus coronarius.'

The White Daisy, innocence (childlikeness).

The Jasmine, amiability, consoler in grief of others, as the poet Moore has it:

> The timid jasmine buds that keep
> Their odors to themselves all day

Do, when the sunlight dies away,
Let the delicious secret out.

The Bindwood, humble readiness to assist and serve.

The Water-lily, eloquence.—It is identical with the lotus plant which, among the Egyptians, was sacred to the Sun and thus became the symbol of enlightenment, instruction. Its particular significance as a token of speech arose probably from the fact that, while it grows in the depth of lakes, it flowers on their surface only. Mrs. Hemans has some exquisite lines on this chaste blossom:

O beautiful thou art
Thou sculpture-like and stately river queen
Crowning the depths, as with the light serene
Of a pure heart.
Bright lily of the waves
Rising in fearless grace with every swell
Thou seems't as if a spirit meekly brave
Dwelt in thy cell.

The Daisy (Easter Daisy), Resurrection.

Out of these flowers one could combine nosegays small and large, or weave a flowery chain to instruct and in a pleasing manner train the power or gift of observation in the young, by which they might learn to occupy their thoughts

usefully and lift them to God. A love of nature is a preservation of many natural virtues, and gives opportunities for useful occupations when idle or thoughtless minds would go adrift.

"Father," said the lay Sister who served at dinner, pointing to a bouquet of roses on the table, "Reverend Mother told us to be like the flowers which do their work and breathe their prayers in silence, always looking down and always growing up. I was wondering why those roses have thorns, when other flowers have none."

"That is because they are so pretty. You see you like to put roses on the table just for their beauty and fragrance. Well, there are little insects that like to feed on the rose in the same way as we like to look on it and drink in its fragrance. To keep them off the flower, it needs protection. The thorns are its safeguard."

"But the insects can creep past the thorns and get at the rose, can they not?"

"Yes, but the thorns are like a warning that says 'Don't.' You see they are distributed all along the stem. The little insect creeping up from below, is misled by the thorn in its way,

not knowing that the point on top is sharp and sometimes oozes forth a stinging liquid. Finding this the parasite goes back, or if it makes a further attempt and discovers similar trouble, it gives up the climb. Other flowers, not so beautiful, though perhaps more useful in many ways than the rose, have different protections, or may not need them, because they don't attract the insect that would destroy them."

Later the chaplain encountered Mother Irene, who told him what the Sister had learnt about the rose, and had proudly related to her. This gave occasion subsequently to Father Martin's explaining about the rose, for the Mother incidentally referred to the *Rosa mystica,* about which some questioning followed.

The *Rosa mystica* is not symbolized by the red rose, nor by the white rose, as is sometimes assumed. The flower is indeed the symbol of love and of beauty; but the red rose speaks of earthly affection, and the white rose is typical of vanished or dead human love.

The symbol of divine charity is the yellow, golden-hued variety, a species of what is commonly styled the tea-rose. In this form it signifies the Christ of the Resurrection, also Our Blessed Lady, the root of Jesse, whence the

flower springs, and by analogy the Church or Spouse of Christ. As such it has figured for a thousand years or more in the Golden Rose bestowed by the Sovereign Pontiffs upon some community or royal person, some queenly woman to whom it might speak of faith, love divine and devotion, by the truth of its gold, the blush of its tincture and the odor of its balm. This kind of rose is of a saffron hue with slight tints of a rose blush (Ward tea-rose).

If the rose says love Christ above man, it does so in silence. Hence it becomes the symbol of secrecy; whence the phrase *sub rosa.* Beyond this it signifies, as generally understood, also generosity, generous devotion, and cheerfulness, under which attribute it belongs to "Merrie England." In every case the thorns on the stems of this beautiful flower tell of guarded affection and suggest that its beauty and the attar it distils or sends incessantly to heaven in fragrant clouds of quiet worship are reached and sustained through a way beset with sacrifice.

"And which is your own favorite flower, Father?"

"Every one of them."

"But if you had to choose one for St. Catherine's, which would you think most adapted to remind us of our duties in the Convent or in school?"

"Have you no preference yourself?" asked Father Martin. "What does Sister Immaculata say?"

"I would choose the lily!" This came from one of the younger nuns.

"In that case I would propose the lily of the valley, or perhaps the white freesia. They differ somewhat in the way they grow, as you know, but what strikes me in both flowers is that they are:

White—clean of heart,
Regular in their series, as they grow on their single stems—observant of rule.

The lily of the valley is a belle or a community of belles, which would probably suit the girls as an attractive symbol of themselves. As to religious—well, they are bells in an additional sense since they perform the function of church bells, calling others to devotion and order. The best part of it is that they exemplify what they preach or teach. And they do it like the bells of the little lily, not only in that they are

humble, or of the valley, but in that they do their ringing without any noise, mostly in silence."

"And what does the freesia lily do?"

"It preaches order, not by bells, but by heads up in rank and file, beginning with the biggest lily at the bottom preaching humility, and the little ones at the end trying to follow suit. You notice in most cases the small flowers are trying to keep on top. But enough for to-day."

"The Father never said a word about our tulips."

"Nor about the Amaryllis beds which make such a fair show. I shall ask him." So Sister Nora did at the next recreation.

"The Amaryllis does not differ much from the colored lily families, if you notice a double trinity in the form of its chalice, and in the contents also. But the tulip is singular."

"Not as humble apparently as the lily," came the opinion from one of the nuns.

"No, it holds its head up straight to heaven like a Pharisee at prayer. Still there is a beautiful significance in that very attitude when you take it in connection with the other qualities of the flower. The tulip is symbolical of a single

virtue—sacrificial prayer. The form of its cup is that of a chalice raised to heaven. The more common species of the yellow and scarlet colors suggests the golden vessel, filled with the Precious Blood, raised at the Elevation at Mass as an offering to the Eternal Father. It speaks of atonement and reparation.

"The shape of the tulip is mostly that of an open cup; but at times the petals bend inward like a closed ciborium. As a symbol of prayer offered in sacrifice you have in these two forms vocal or open-mouthed adoration and meditation. In either case the action is directed straight up to heaven. A prayer rising from the golden cup of a true heart, glowing with the fervor of loving devotion symbolized by the red. The tulip is guarded, like the lily, by a sword-shaped foil indicating mortification. There is an absence of frondage and branches, which betokens simplicity and holy poverty.—There!"

On Saturday Father Martin dropped in at the hothouse while the gardner was selecting the consignment of flowers for the altar. The Sister was waiting.

"Is not this a beautiful flower?" she said, as she held up a white narcissus plant. "You

never spoke of it in your interesting illustrations. What does it signify?"

"Oh, the daffodil—why it combines the tulip with the lily. The inner cup, yellow with carmine fringe, you see, is a symbol of the chalice at Mass filled with Precious Blood. It is guarded by the white—six—petals of the virgin hearts of the community. The six foils of the perianth might mean six qualities of a good nun:

Unsullied heart
Clean hands
Pure intention

and the silence, charity and promptness of the Immaculata."

The Sister laughed:

"You just made up those qualities."

"So I did," answered the Father. "Do you likewise and you will be perfect."

"Make garlands—symbol of diligence—for the children, out of the flowers which they love," was his frequent comment when in the garden.

It developed later on that not all the plants were meant to be symbols of beautiful qualities of soul. Some of them teach by the opposite, as, for example, the Marigold, stands for restlessness; the Buttercup, for ingratitude, or any

childish disposition that is hard to cure. The reason of this characteristic attribute in an otherwise rather pleasant flower lies in the fact that its acrid root, if it comes in contact with delicate or broken skin, produces inflammation and sores difficult to heal. Similarly the Dodder, a twining though leafless plant which, as a parasite, lives on the roots of flowers and vegetables and destroys them in time by its poisonous influence.

Such was Father Martin's theology in the garden life of St. Catherine's. He had many more things to say in time about the medicinal and nutritive qualities of the plants round about everywhere.

CHAPTER XV

In the Sacristy—The Altar Boy's Last Wish

Father Martin had fallen into a comfortable doze after dinner when a knock at the door aroused him and a voice said:

"There is a messenger saying that little James Bennet is very ill and wants to see you. The boy is not expected to live till morning."

Little James was the Benjamin of the altar boys from St. Bridget's, who had just begun to serve his turn at the Convent, and the chaplain had taken a great liking to the child. He afterward told the story as here given:

"I hurriedly put on my coat and went down to the door. It was Mr. Bennet himself who informed me that his youngest boy—he was only six—had been taken with spasms; and though the doctor did not think there was any serious danger, the little fellow had pleaded for Father Martin so earnestly that the father felt impelled to comply with the child's wish, whilst he re-

gretted the inconvenience to which he had put me.

"I took the Holy Oils with me—the parish priest and I having an understanding between us, as I was sometimes called to take his place with the sick when there was need. It was well I did; for when we reached the house, the child had had a second attack, much more violent, from which he recovered only after the medicine ordered by the physician had arrived and been given him. It was a touching sight to see the young innocent who, I was told, had been the pride of the Sanctuary Class, praying that he might be anointed. He seemed to feel quite sure that he was going to die, and attempted by his words and acts to soothe his good mother, who was heartbroken at the mere thought of losing him. I heard his confession; he had been admitted only a month before because of his own eager desire that as an altar boy he might begin a new life without any sin to wound the Sacred Heart of our Dear Lord Whom he was to serve at the altar on Sundays. His intelligent demand, and the doubtful condition to which the last attack had reduced him, prompted me to give him Extreme Unction. I took occasion, however, to emphasize the fact that one great

purpose of the Sacrament was to implore recovery from serious illness, if it were profitable to the soul; and that Our Lord would want him to serve the Sisters' Mass. This was a privilege which the younger boys valued highly, since, in other cases, it was only permitted those who after a considerable apprenticeship in the Sanctuary Class had obtained a record for perfect observance of the sacristy rules.

"As I was on the point of leaving the room with some words intended to console the family, who dearly loved the child, the father made a sign to me, pointing to the bed. The sick boy had fixed his eyes on me, with his tightly-folded hands on his heart, as if something still troubled him. I bent over the little black head, and said, 'What is it, James?'

"He looked steadily for a moment into my face, as if to gather from my look the answer to the question in his heart.

" 'Father' he whispered, " 'Father, do you think Our Lord—do you think He would come to me—now—here? I know I am not prepared, I don't know enough, and am not good enough—but I wanted to ask Him so many things, and Aunt Nellie promised to go with me to the church in the evenings, when I could stay

a little while with her before the Blessed Sacrament. But now I shall not be able to go, and I would like to ask Him that He may keep mamma and papa from harm if he wants me to come to Him.'

"There was no one to hear these words but myself; the others had left the room under the impression that the little fellow had some scruple of conscience which he wanted to confess. I assured him that I would be back shortly and prepare him for Holy Communion, and that Our Lord would be glad to come to him, since he desired it so much and proposed to keep his heart entirely for Him. Somehow, I felt the boy could not be convinced of the probability of recovery, and I left it so. There was for a moment great joy in his innocent countenance, when he heard me assure him that he might receive Our Lord; then a slight shadow, as though of disappointment, crept over the face. I could not interpret it at the time. An hour later, when the messenger came to say that little James was dead, I understood that the child's soul had had a prophetic realization that he would not live to have his wish fulfilled on earth."

When Father Martin learnt of the boy's death

he was deeply affected. His fondness for boys had given to his work at the Cathedral the character of a relaxation which reacted, not only upon his social but his spiritual life. He never wearied devising schemes for their instruction and enjoyment, and in his ways with them there shone forth an innocent childlikeness which made one think of "San Pippo." It was probably, too, the secret of Father Martin's influence with the parents, even those who were far from being tractable or devout. He made use of the children to bring their elders back to their duties, and many an indifferent Catholic father would have household devotions in the evenings, induced thereto simply by the instant example and earnest appeal of some one among the children.

On the morning of the funeral Father Martin went over to St. Bridget's. The pastor happened to be in the sacristy. There the little altar of St. John Berchmans was decorated with white flowers. The altar boys had asked permission to watch at the bier of their young companion, and it was arranged to have the little white coffin remain before the shrine on the eve of the funeral. The incident also gave an impulse of special devotion to the Confirma-

tion class, since all the grown children had doted on little "Jamesie," and many a time his unconscious example had reproved the truants.

It should be said here that St. Bridget's sacristy was a model of cleanliness and order, although it was not very conveniently located, being somewhat below the level of the old church, which had been enlarged twice, with a limited area on one side. Everything, however, had its proper place, and the furnishing was in keeping with the purpose of what our Bishop called the vestibule of the Holy of Holies. The central panel of the altar boys' wardrobe had the word SACRISTY printed in heavy illuminated type.

"One can hardly mistake the place without being admonished by an advertisement; or, is there another sacristy behind this door?" said Father Martin, later on when adverting to the arrangement at St. Bridget's.

"Oh, no," answered the pastor, "that is one of our methods of instructing the young lads who serve at the altar. These letters contain the rules of the sacristy, which every boy on duty is supposed to have learnt and to remember. Before they learn the Latin prayers they

are obliged to pass an examination on the meaning of the word 'Sacristy.' "

"How?"

"Look closer. You see the capital letters are merely ornamental initials for the legend below. *S*ilence, *A*ttention, *C*leanliness. These are the three great rules, a wanton violation of which means dismissal from the Sanctuary Class, which is composed of boys whose conduct in school has been faultless for a whole year. They are taken from different divisions—the one recommendation, besides having deserved the twelve good deportment cards of the year, being that they can perfectly pronounce the Latin prayers."

"An excellent scheme, but do those terms—silence, attention and cleanliness—convey a sufficiently clear lesson to a boy's mind so as to command his constant obedience to them? I fancy that cleanliness, for example, is a rather vague term in the average boy's vocabulary. You mean, of course, that his dress and his shoes be clean, and that he keep his cassock and surplice unsoiled. But as to the degree of that cleanliness I imagine it would be difficult to draw the line just where a boy commits an offence for which serious punishment like dis-

missal from the class could be prudently inflicted."

"We have no trouble in that regard. The juniors are at first only permitted to come on Sundays. They wear their best clothes, of course. As soon as they present themselves, the senior of the sacristy examines their hands; these are expected to be faultlessly clean. Besides, every boy washes his hands right here before he goes to the altar or touches anything belonging to it. There is soap, a towel which is daily renewed, and a nailbrush. I hold that *this single rule,* rigorously insisted upon, effects the perfect observance of all the others."

"I understand. Unconsciously the boys get the idea of reverence due to the holy place from the trouble they are put to to keep clean fingers. Some pastors make their altar boys put on gloves, but this, besides being against the rubrics, is apt to defeat the aim of personal cleanliness as a requisite for approaching reverently the altar."

"Precisely. Every boy has a pair of ordinary gloves which he puts on when lighting the candles or preparing the thurible, but they are not used in actual service at the altar. Each one has, moreover, a fixed day for cleaning his

cassock, and he has to provide for the washing of his surplice, which is given to him in a little cloth bag. For all this they are allowed opportunity and leisure, and a boy who serves the late Mass may take sufficient time to change his dress at home before appearing in school, because I consider it infinitely more beneficial to a boy's education to get the idea that the Mass is the greatest service in which he can take part, than that he should be present at a reading exercise in school. Every preference is given to those children who are on actual duty as servers in the sacristy. They have their hours of reading in our library on Sunday afternoons. That stands for *R.* I myself select the books, show them pictures and in various ways manage to amuse them when I can be with them. In this way we hope to discover their dispositions and special gifts, so as to determine their aptitude in future life or their vocation for some particular profession. We have five boys at present in college who regularly write to report their progress; two of whom I expect to send to the Seminary."

"Do you mean to say you pay for the education of these boys?"

"No, except in one case. Generally the pa-

rents are able to provide the expenses, and occasionally I suggest to some of the wealthier parishioners that they lend their means to a boy's advancement. But I keep them all under our control, and when they come home in vacation I see to it that they give edification and occupy themselves in a way helpful to their physical, intellectual and moral progress."

"Under *R,* I see, you have the rules for the reading-room of the sanctuary boys."

"Yes, but the reading-room is generally my sitting-room. We have a hall with two divisions in the school, with a library for the children, where the boys and girls who have made their First Communion go on Sundays. But the sanctuary boys are understood to be privileged characters, and they realize the distinction."

"But what rules do you need for them in that case?"

"Oh, they may borrow books, and one of them reads aloud any part that he thinks particularly interesting to the others. They thus show their taste, their intelligence and particular inclination. Sometimes they copy or memorize parts, and the older ones even write short compositions on what they have read. The main reason for having this feature of reading

among the sacristy regulations is to keep the boys in mind of the privilege attached to the observance of the three rules of Silence, Attention to the duties and orders of the priest or the prefect, and Cleanliness."

"What are the other letters—I—S—T—Y?"

"Instruction every Friday evening to prepare for the ceremonies of the following Sunday or week. They must not forget this as a most important duty, to which has to yield all other engagement or occupation. They are taught everything connected with the liturgy—the purpose of the altar furniture, the meaning of the vestments, and their colors, the chant, and the translation of the principal prayers, etc."

"I—instruction. S—Saints, that is, special feasts of the year on which the service is more solemn and the altar boys go to Communion. T—Table of the week, that is, a card on which are inscribed the names of the boys who serve regularly from Sunday to Saturday. This table is changed every week and is in the charge of the prefect, who sees that the boys appointed are in time and properly prepared for their respective duties. The last line is a reminder: 'Your service is that of God!' which is calcu-

lated to give their minds a supernatural direction."

"Well, well; and you say the boys observe these rules without trouble?"

"Yes; the only strict rule we have to enforce is the keeping clean of their hands. It works like a charm, they remember everything else; and indeed it makes little gentlemen of them in other respects as well."

"But it must take a great part of your time, or of the assistant priest to supervise all this."

"I consider that the time thus spent, and the labor connected with it, is the most important and valuable asset in a successful pastoral life, next to the celebration of Mass. Indeed I should allow the assistant to attend to it only in rare cases when I cannot do so myself, for it makes me feel that the sanctuary is properly served, which is my chief responsibility and begets proportionate reverence in my people. Moreover it supplies my daily meditation, which, I am sorry to say, I hardly ever make; and acts as a stimulus to personal reverence. Besides, these boys teach me lots of things that will help to save my poor soul; and they spread the example of their fidelity and lively faith through the parish as well as in the school."

CHAPTER XVI

Father Martin Has a Visit from a Naval Officer—What He Teaches Him and What He Learns

"Who was the young man whom I found at the organ in the chapel this afternoon?"

"A brother of one of the novices. He is quite a musical genius, they say. Their father is an organ-builder, and as there was some trouble with the instrument Sister suggested that the young man might be able to locate the cause and remedy it."

"And did he?" Father Martin was somewhat of a player himself, and interested.

"I don't know; he promised to come again to-morrow, and that the organ would be in order for Sunday. He spoke of calling on you, but I believe you were away at the time. He is from the Naval Academy in Annapolis, and stays with a relative in the city."

The next day the young man presented him-

self to the chaplain, at his door. He was a fine specimen of the American youth, and his open countenance and frank manner of speech at once gained him a pleasant reception from the priest. He introduced himself as the brother of Sister Adele, the novice.

"Oh, the young midshipman from Annapolis whom I saw at the organ yesterday?"

"Yes, Father. I am a cadet in my fourth year, and on furlough in the city to attend the marriage of an elder sister. But I wanted to see you, to borrow a book, if I may, from you. My sister tells me that the work is very likely in their college library but she is not sure. Perchance you have the volume and will let me use it for a few days while I am here."

"And what is the book?"

"The *Perirrhanterium* of George Herbert. The Anglican clergyman who acts as Chaplain at the Naval Academy, and who is a relative of my mother's, insists that I should read it, and read it carefully. I am, of course, a Catholic, though not a very devout one—all the piety of the family has gone into my sister here, I fancy. I have done very little reading of religious or spiritual books, and am sorry to say have neither natural nor cultivated taste for

that kind of reading. But I am fond enough of the classics and of art, as my monitor knows; and this is why he recommends the book to me, I imagine,—a sort of sugar-coated pill to cure my disease, though I really don't know anything about George Herbert, except that he was a poet and a Welsh parson."

"Then you don't know what this *Perirrhanterium* is all about?"

"I confess that I don't; but I took note of the title and promised to read the book at the first opportunity, provided I could get it."

"The fact is that the actual title of the book you are looking for is *The Church Porch.* Your friend is probably a scholar of the old type, who reads Herbert with his Greek classics. The Wiltshire country pastor had a good deal of the Catholic in him, and clinging to the earlier traditions of pre-Reformation times he wrote a poem on the *Holy Water Font,* which is the English translation for your *Perirrhanterium.* Later on he changed the title to the now popular one of *The Church Porch,* under which it is probably more likely found in his collected poems. Come in. I think I have a copy and should be glad to read it with you, if that will serve any purpose."

"Capital, Father. You would make the task easy for me, and probably help me to get the true gist of the verses. I am free for a week or ten days, and shall be a daily visitor here, as my folks do not live far away, and my sister, being a bit anxious about my faith, has made me promise to come every day. She catechizes me in her way, and wanted me also to see you. It is a sort of mission I am supposed to make, and I know it will do me good."

The visits of the young naval officer proved to be a pleasant diversion for Father Martin as well as a profitable one, from a spiritual point of view, to the former. It gave the priest also an insight into the value of military discipline when kept on the high plane of good ethics. Seamen, separated as they are for the most part from the artificial and demoralizing indulgences of social life on land, are apt to develop a sense of straightforward attention to duty which is ennobled by a common altruism akin to charity, and a courage sustained by the constant danger to life from the elements around them. Simplicity, directness, alert vigilance and a steady facing of danger in which responsibility for the welfare of others is an essential part, are qualities found not only in the average captain and

naval officer but in the men who have done long service on sea generally. The case of the young cadet was of course one of a beginner without practical experience beyond the periodical cruises to which the pupils of the Academy are inured. But the young man held the rank conferred on cadets after a term of apprenticeship which gives them a good training in mastership and exercises them in those admirable qualities of manliness, aptitude for the heroic, order and a sense of responsibility which produce and become the basis of all natural and supernatural virtue.

"Well, Sir, I found your poet," was the greeting with which Father Martin received the young man on the following day.

"Thank you, Father. I am glad to have this opportunity."

"I am surprised that your friend at the Academy should not be able to secure the volume for you. Have you no access to the library of your College?"

"Oh, yes, if we make special application. But most of our time is occupied in training, and the reading done is of a more or less technical nature. A few of the officers and cadets have private collections of general literature, but

they are mostly of popular and lighter character. Besides, I now think that my tutor wanted to stimulate my sense of inquisitiveness and purposely gave me the esoteric title to make me find the book or else to prevent my being frightened away or prejudiced against it by the religious title given it, as you said, I think, in the popular edition. He himself is a theologian, but he knows that I have no inclination or talent for the Church; so he gave me the Greek label of the classic instead of the vernacular, which might lead me to suspect 'religious proselytism.'"

"I see. Probably you are right, though George Herbert is a very decent parson and you need not fear his pietism, for it is really plain ethics, such as you would find useful in building up and sustaining character through sound self-discipline. Herbert belongs to the school of Crashaw. They were both Cambridge men and much of the same temper of mind. Crashaw's travels abroad led him to become acquainted with Catholic practice and as a result he entered the Church. He published his *Steps to the Temple* some years after Herbert had written his *The Temple,* of which the verses you look for are a serial part, and which was

only printed in 1633, the year of Herbert's death. He had bequeathed the MS. to his brother Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, the author of a work entitled *De Veritate*. He lived in one of the most interesting periods of our English literary history. His biographer associates him with Ben Jonson and Shakespeare, although the latter died when Herbert was only eighteen years of age. Yes, he was a brother to the Lord Herbert of Cherbury, who was something of a statesman, a soldier, and quite a genius; yet George remained to the end of his life a country parson of the little church of Bemerton.

"It is somewhat strange that a man of such family and so gifted, should have retained that modest benefice, especially in the days of Charles I. But the poor parish was practically a matter of his deliberate choice. He was fond of solitude and study. In the earlier days of his career he had indeed been ambitious for preferment, and his connection with the Duke of Richmond promised him an honorable post at Court whilst King James was still living. But matters of state changing, our young divine betook himself to reflection, and so he altered his plans, much to the peace and profit of his

soul. In the poem you have there he gives wise rules of life. His verses, addressed alike to clerics and people of the world, abound in sound principles, not without a seasoning of shrewd and practical observations such as you might find in Ecclesiasticus or Proverbs. Let me read you a passage to illustrate what I say."

With this Father Martin took down the volume from the shelf and turned over the leaves in a familiar way. While reading he interrupted himself here and there to explain some motive or other of the writer.

"Is there anything better to be found, for example," he began, "on the *art of conversation* than these quaint lines:

"In thy discourse, if thou desire to please,
Be by turns courteous, useful, new or wittie:
Usefulness comes by labour, wit by ease;
Courtesie grows in court; news in the citie.
Get a good stock of these, then draw the card
That suits him best of whom thy speech is heard.

"Entice all neatly to what they know best:
For so thou dost thyself and him a pleasure;
(But a proud ignorance will lose his rest,
Rather than show his cards); steal from his treasure
What to ask further. Doubts well-raised do lock
The speaker to thee, and preserve thy stock.

"If thou be Master-gunner, spend not all
That thou canst speak, at once; but husband it,
And give men turns of speed; do not forestall
By lavishness thine own and others' wit,
As if thou mad'st thy will. A civil guest
Will no more talk all, than eat all at the feast.

It should be said here that the chaplain was not only very fond of writers like George Herbert, Crashaw, and others of the same type, but he was thoroughly familiar with their works. In truth, they were men much in disposition of mind like himself, who shaped his convictions and whom he treasured accordingly. The fact was he had his copy of Herbert richly annotated, using it both as a text for spiritual reading and as a sort of meditation book.

"Here is a similar precept given by way of annotation from Bacon (thirty-second essay), who writes: 'Let him be sure to leave other men their turns to speak. Nay, if there be any that would reign, and take up all the time, let him find means to take them off, and bring others on; as musicians use to do with those who dance too long Galliards.'

Advice to Persons Engaged in Argument

"Speaking of persons engaged in argument, friend Herbert gives this advice:

"Be calm in arguing: for fierceness makes
Errour a fault, and truth discourtesie.
Why should I feel another man's mistakes
More than his sicknesses or povertie?
In love—I should; but anger is not love,
Nor wisdome neither; therefore gently move.

Calmnesse is great advantage: he that lets
Another chafe may warm him at his fire;
Mark all his wandrings, and enjoy his frets,
As cunning fencers suffer heat to tire.
Truth dwells not in the clouds; the bow that's there
Doth often aim at, never hits the sphere.

"What rules more admirably just could one formulate for conduct in lively discussion involving the defence of a personal opinion, or answering a charge which calls for defence, than these:

"Mark what another sayes; for many are
Full of themselves and answer their own notion.
Take all unto thee; then with equal care
Ballance each dramme of reason, like a potion,
If truth be with thy friend be with them both;
Share in the conquest, and confess a troth.

"There is a passage in another part of the poem, on the same topic. Let me find it—here it is:

> "Catch not at quarrels. He that dares not speak
> Plainly and home, is coward of the two.
> Think not thy fame at ev'ry twitch will break;
> By great deeds show that thou canst little do;
> And do them not; that shall thy wisdome be
> And change thy temperance into braverie.

"Again, note this on the employment of irony or wit in converse with friends:

"Laugh not too much; the wittie man laughs least;
For wit is newes only to ignorance.
Lesse at thine own things laugh, lest in a jest
Thy person share, and the conceit advance.
Make not thy sport abuses, for the fly
That feeds on dung is colouréd thereby.

"Pick out of mirth, like stones out of the ground,
Profanenesse, filthinesse, abusivenesse;
These are the scumme with which coarse wits abound;
The fine may spare these well, yet not go lesse.
All things are bigge with jest; nothing that's plain
But may be wittie if thou have the vein.

"Wit's an unruly engine, wildly striking
Sometimes a friend, sometimes the engineer;
Hast thou the knack? pamper it not with liking;
But if thou want it, buy it not too deare.

Many affecting wit beyond their power
Have got to be a deare fool for an houre.
When thou dost tell another's jest, therein
Omit the oathes, which true wit cannot need:
Pick out of tales the mirth, but not the sinne.
He pares his apple that will cleanly feed.

"Herbert knew the value of solitude and reflection, as he showed by his conduct; and good Isaac Walton, the fisherman who wrote his life, seems to think that this love of solitariness made him withdraw too much from the lawful enjoyments of life so as to impair his health. He himself advises:

> By all means use sometimes to be alone;
> Salute thyself, see what thy soul doth wear.

Conviviality and Conventionality

"He is no extremist, as he proves in his counsels about conventionality, and the use of wines and games. In the matter of drinking he bids his friends observe fixed rules:

"Drink not the third glasse, which thou canst not tame
When once it is within thee; but before
Mayst rule it as thou list, and pour the shame
Which it would poure on thee, upon the floore.
It is most just to throw that on the ground
Which would throw me there if I keep the round.

"Shall I, to please another's wine-sprung minde.
Lose all mine own? He that hath lost the reins
Is outlawed by himselfe; must I finde
The ill that courses through his veins?
Stay at the third glasse; if thou lose thy hold,
Then thou art modest and the wine grows bold.

"If reason move not gallants, quit the room;
(All in a shipwreck shift their severall way)
Let not a common ruine thee intombe:
Be not a beast in courtesie, but stay,
Stay at the third cup, or forego the place;
Wine above all things doth God's stamp deface.

"Similarly wise is his warning about the diversion of cards or the like pastime.

"Play not for gain, but sport. Who plays for more
Than he can lose with pleasure, stakes his heart.

"And again, a little further on:

"If yet thou love game at so deere a rate,
Learn this, that hath old gamesters deerely cost:
Dost lose? Rise up. Dost winne? Rise in that state.
Who strive to sit out losing hands, are lost.
Game is a civil gunpowder, in peace
Blowing up houses with their whole increase.

"It must not be forgotten that Herbert lived in an age when the drinking habit was consid-

ered a common and becoming diversion of hospitable folk, and when license of speech had its full sway. Henry Vaughan, 'the Silurist,' who lived in that day, says of our poet that he was the first who, with effectual success, attempted a diversion from the foul and overflowing stream of vulgar verse-making customary at the time. Vaughan attributes his own conversion toward a saner life to the pious example and writings of Herbert, whose saintly conversation gained many others to God. That must have been the general impression of all who knew him. Indeed, I remember, when visiting Cambridge some years after I had become enamored of Herbert's writing, a fine painted window in one of the chapels at Trinity College, in which the figure of George Herbert is represented as belonging to the household of Lazarus in Bethany, where Our Divine Lord loved to abide. If his principles are any indication of his acts, the poet-parson must have been the model of his little flock, as for many others who chanced to know him. Listen to this, inculcating,

Consistency and Self-control

"When thou dost purpose ought (within thy power),
Be sure to doe it, though it be but small:

"Constancie knits the bones, and makes us stowre,
When wanton pleasures beckon us to thrall.
Who breaks his own bond, forfeiteth himself,
What nature made a ship, he makes a shelf.
Do all things like a man, not sneakingly:
Think the king sees thee still; for *his King* does.

"Art thou a magistrate? then be severe:
If studious, copie fair what time hath blurred;
Redeem truth from his jawes: if souldier,
Chase brave employments with a naked sword
Throughout the world. Fool not; for all may have
If they dare try, a glorious life, or grave.

"Who keeps no guard upon himself, is slack
And rots to nothing at the next great thaw.
Man is a shop of rules, a well truss'd pack
Whose every parcel underwrites a law.
Lose not thyself, nor give thy humours way,
God gave them to thee under lock and key."

Here they were interrupted by the dinner-bell, and for the moment had to part company with the wisdom of this little book by George Herbert of which Crashaw wrote to a friend two hundred and fifty years ago:

Know you, Faire, on what you look;
Divinest love lies in this book:
Expecting fire from your eyes,
To kindle this his sacrifice.

When young Oliphant called the next evening the volume of Herbert's *Church Porch* was still lying open on the table where Father Martin had laid it down at noon the day before. He took it up. A passage scored in the margin by the words "Aim and Manners" caught his glance and he promptly began by reading aloud the lines touching

PRINCIPLES OF GENERAL CONDUCT

Pitch thy behaviour low, thy projects high;
So shalt thou humble and magnanimous be.
Sink not in spirit; who aimeth at the sky
Shoots higher much than he that means a tree.
A grain of glorie mixt with humblenesse
Cures both a fever and lethargicknesse.

Let thy minde still be bent, still plotting where,
And when, and how the businesse may be done.
Slacknesse breeds worms; but the sure traveller
Thou he alight sometimes, still goeth on.
Active and stirring spirits live alone:
Write on the others: "Here lies such a one."

Slight not the smallest losse, whether it be
In love or honour; take account of all.
Shine like the sunne in every corner; see
Whether thy stock of credit swell or fall.
Who say "I care not," those I give for lost;
And to instruct them 'twill not quit the cost.

Scorn no man's love, though of a mean degree,
(Love is a present for a mighty king),
Much lesse make anyone thine ennemie.
As gunnes destroy, so may a little sling.
The cunning workman never doth refuse
The meanest tool, that he may chance to use.

It has already been explained here that throughout the volume from which the priest was reading there were notes and occasional references to an appendix, which served either as a key to the interpretation of the poet's thought, or illustrated his meaning by some parallel passage drawn from Sacred Scripture, or from the old classical writers. Father Martin himself seemed to have these references off quite by memory, for he would at times interrupt the reading by mentioning what some other writer had said in the same vein as our author. It had been a habit with him for years to annotate the books he was in the habit of reading constantly. In this way many of the volumes in

his library were profusely marked with notes in the margin or with added inserts, making them a sort of chrestomathy, a selection of passages and notes containing gems of good and useful reading with which he stored his mind and colored his whole intellectual expression. It was this habit that enabled him to impart an element of instruction and a natural charm to his most ordinary conversation. The fact that he had utilized his earlier years by reading *nunquam sine stylo,* as the Stoics taught, had enabled him to garner the fruits of his most ordinary observations into a private storehouse, making it easy for him at any time to recall what had impressed him as most beautiful in the literary treasure-troves of the past. He had not only enjoyed the evanescent odor of the flowers, but had sucked into his very being, and converted to practical use, the sweets that were gathered in their chalices; and they had contributed to his moral and intellectual growth and aided him in adapting to his own life the active principles which had rendered the lives of others beautiful and fruitful. What he had read with deliberation and found good became his own by repetition and habitual reflection. Hence he might say with our author that he

profited of all wisdom, whether abroad or at home, which by careful selection he appropriated, and freely gave to others.

All forrain wisdome doth amount to this,
To take all that is given; whether wealth
Or love or language; nothing comes amisse:
A good digestion turneth all to health:
And then as farre as fair behaviour may,
Strike off all scores; none are so cleare as they.

Keep all thy native good, and naturalize
All forrain of that name; but scorn their ill.
Embrace their activenesse, not vanities.
Who follows all things forfeiteth his will.
If thou observest strangers in each fit,
In time they'll runne thee out of all thy wit.

"There are some excellent precepts Herbert gives on economical living. That is the sort of wisdom which it behooves a naval officer, out at sea, I trow, occasionally to remember," he added good-humoredly, "not only when rations or the water-supply run short, but also at home, for the pay of army officers is, I dare say, limited to their needs, with the proviso of a moderate pension in cases of accident or retirement from the service."

"The allowances of the officers, like those of the men, are rarely beyond our actual needs,"

replied the cadet. "Indeed, it is easier for a man in the ranks to save than for us when not away from home."

"In that case hear the sane counsel which our sage provides:

"Never exceed thy income. Youth may make
Ev'n with the yeare; but age, if it will hit,
Shoots a bow short, and lessens still his stake,
As the day lessens, and his life with it.
Thy children, kindred, friends upon thee call;
Before thy journey fairly part with all.

"Yet in thy thriving still misdoubt some evil,
Lest gaining gain on thee, and make thee dimme
To all things els. Wealth is the conjurer's devil,
Whom when he thinks he hath, the devil hath him.
Gold thou mayst safely touch; but if it stick
Unto thy hands, it woundeth to the quick.

"By no means runne in debt; take thine own measure.
Who cannot live on twenty pounds a yeare,
Cannot on fourtie; he's a man of pleasure,
A kinde of thing that's for itself too deere.
The curious unthrift makes his cloth too wide,
And spares himself, but would his taylor chide.

"Spend not on hopes. They that by pleading clothes
Do fortunes seek when worth and service fail,
Would have their tale beleevéd for their oathes,

And are like empty vessels under sail.
Old courtiers know this. Therefore set out so
As all the day thou mayst hold out to go.

"Be thriftie, but not covetous; therefore give
Thy need, thine honour, and thy friend his due.
Never was scraper brave man. Get to live;
Then live, and use it; else it is not true
That thou hast gotten. Surely use alone
Makes money not a contemptible stone.

"Of course the advice about thrift hardly applies to a person in your position, unless you were to leave the service and engage in business. But here is something in similar vein about dressing and personal apparel:

"Affect in things about thee cleanlinesse,
That all may gladly board thee, as a flowere.
Slovens take up their stock of noisomenesse
Beforehand, and anticipate their last houre.
Let thy minde's sweetness have his operation
Upon thy body, clothes and habitation.

"In clothes, cheap handsomenesse doth bear the bell,
Wisdome's a trimmer thing, than shop e'er gave.
Say not then: This with that lace will do well;
But: This with my discretion will be brave."

It should be observed that Father Martin had not grouped the verses in his reading as the

author had originally done. He took as his guide the marks in his copy which were really meant to furnish him ready matter for quotation.

In this way the two men went in a few hours over the main contents of the poem recommended to our young cadet. Mr. Oliphant was delighted, and determined at once to procure for himself a copy which he meant to use.

"It's more interesting, Father, than the prayer-book, and so sane that any man could approve who wants to build up character, don't you think?"

"That may be true," said Father Martin, "and I am glad you think so, and mean to read George Herbert as a matter of habit. But it must not keep you from your religious duties. These have a reality of benefit which does not appeal to feeling or the sense of conventional propriety. Nor does Herbert omit to advert to them in his poem. I have omitted reference to them because I knew your mind. Nevertheless you must hold fast to your faith. Let me read just a snatch or two on the subject:

"When once thy foot enters the church, be bare.
God is more there than thou; for thou art there
Onely by his permission. Then beware,

And make thyself all reverence and fear.
Kneeling ne'er spoil'd silk stocking: quit thy state;
All equal are within the churches gate.

"In time of service seal up both thine eies,
And send them to thine heart; that, spying sinne,
They may weep out the stains by them did rise.
Those doors being shut, all by the eare comes in.
—Who marks in church-time others' symmetrie
Makes all their beauty his deformitie.

Let vain or busie thoughts have there no part.
Bring not thy plough, thy plots, thy pleasures thither.
Christ purged His temple, so must thou thy heart.
All worldly thoughts are but theeves met together
To couzin [1] thee. Look to thy actions well,
For churches either are our heaven or hell."

"I understand, Father, and I go of course to Mass, though rarely to listen to sermons. They sometimes (to be frank) irritate me, either because they are mere talks or tirades, or else display a desire to please rather than to instruct. I know it is not my business to criticize preachers or the clergy, but at times their manner grates upon one's sensitiveness."

"Yes? Well, then, since you cannot correct the preacher, the correction may lie in the prac-

[1] Deceive.

tice of patience on the part of the hearer. Listen to this:

"Judge not the preacher, for he is thy judge.
If thou mislike him, thou conceiv'st him not.
God calleth preaching folly. Do not grudge
To pick out treasures from an earthen pot.
The worst speak sometimes good; if all want sense,
God takes a text, and preacheth patience.

"He that gets patience, and the blessing which
Preachers conclude with, has not lost his pains.
He that by being at church escapes the ditch,
Which he might fall in by companions, gains.
He that loves God's abode, and to combine
With saints on earth, shall one day with them shine.

"Jest not at the preacher's language or expression;
How knowest thou, but thy sinnes made him miss-
carrie?
Then turn thy faults and his into confession:
God sent him, whatso'er he be, o tarry,
And love him for his Master; his condition,
Though it be ill, makes him no ill physician.

"Well, I think we have taken the meat out of that poem. But let me read the concluding stanzas; they are like the last flowers in the spiritual bouquet, as the French masters of meditation say.

ADMONITION TO SELF-EXAMINATION

"Summe up at night what thou hast done by day,
And in the morning what thou hast to do.
Dresse and undresse thy soul: mark the decay
And growth of it. If with thy watch that too
Be down, then winde up both, since we shall be
Most surely judg'd, make thy accounts agree.

"In brief, acquit thee bravely; play the man,
Look not on pleasures as they come, but go.
Defer not the least vertue. Life's poore span
Make not an ell, by trifling in thy wo.
If thou do ill; the joy fades, not the pains;
If well; the pain doth fade, the joy remains."

"Tell me, Father Martin," said the cadet, after the priest had returned the book to its place on the shelf, "how you came to get the habit of making these records which I noticed in the volume you had in your hand. Is there any system by which one might acquire the same with a moderate hope of good results for such as I? You began, no doubt, to adopt this method of utilizing your time and readings early, perhaps, during your student career. I begin to realize the value of carefully chosen reading, and whilst my future life is pretty well defined in its duties, I think there will be

times when the question of how to employ one's leisure to the best advantage becomes urgent. I hate to be idle, and you have suggested a way to find occupation which would be a pleasure at the same time, and also improve one's manhood."

"I don't know that it requires any particular method apart from the desire to keep hold of a good thought when you meet it. And as for your age—why, you are beginning life, and there is nothing in the world to hinder you, in your present circumstances, from beginning a scrap-book of this kind."

Father Martin took down from the shelf Sydney Smith's *Common Place Book.*

"See, here is one way. Another is to have a topical notebook, alphabetically arranged, in which you write down thoughts, facts, or sources of information which occur to you in reading and which prove useful in your work later on. Of course it is quite possible that to sketch out a definite plan might be helpful; but that should consist rather in observing a few rules as to the character of the reading one should adhere to, and by finding a way to make different topics bear upon one point of illustration. But then—you don't find anything in

these rules of conduct that is likely to conflict with the army regulations or the principles of ethics taught at the Naval Academy?"

"On the contrary, Sir, I think they harmonize very well with what our manuals of training inculcate. The rules of discipline are very strict and cover the conduct of the men at all times."

"Still, I presume they are more or less restricted to externals and don't touch the private life or moral motives of the soldiers. You obey because violation of orders is severely punished, or prevents promotion. I thould think that the tendency of discipline in the army or navy is toward making men as exact in the performance of fixed duties as a machine would be."

"Oh, no, Sir. We are especially warned by the instructions that accompany the regulations of conduct in the navy and army, to bear in mind the reasons on which good discipline is based, so as to develop habits of self-control, neatness, order and punctuality. Our chief officer, though he professes no special creed, insists that faith in God is a fundamental belief which inculcates, and is demonstrated by, order, obedience, respect for authority and confidence in superiors. He insists on a high stand-

ard of excellence in the performance of all duties whatsoever, because the service is not man-worship but God-worship."

"Still, the chief sanction of exact obedience is, at least with the common man in the ranks, the fear of the knout."

"No Sir. We don't use the knout in the navy."

"Well, flogging, or court-martial, with deposition at the discretion of the officer in charge. Isn't that it?"

"Oh no, Sir. Court-martial is extremely rare. Flogging or similar infliction of the Russian type, never. The disciplinary punishments which an officer in command is authorized to inflict are limited to admonition, reprimand, withholding of privileges, extra fatigue, and certain restrictions."

"What do you mean by extra fatigue?"

"Such labor as cleaning guns, digging drains, cutting wood, which is not in the regular routine work of the company. Only in the case of men who are found to be drunk or obscene, drastic measures, such as the use of a cold-water hose, have at times been employed; but always with great care and the sole purpose of obtaining adequate results of reform."

"I am glad to hear that indeed. Then the officers have, or at least recognize, a moral as well as a military and penal code?"

"Decidedly so. Why, I have in my pocket a set of *Dont's* which are to an officer like the precepts or commands of the Church."

"And do they touch the moral conduct of the officer?"

"I think they do, as a matter of fact. Here they are, if you will allow me to read some of them for you. Of course they sound rather practical, as they are meant to be."

With this the young officer took out a small notebook and began to read:

Don't assert yourself or your accomplishments. They will be more appreciated when found by others.

Don't affect superiority over your brother officers either as regards knowledge or ignorance. Prigs and ignoramuses are alike intolerable.

Don't sneer at anybody either openly or behind their backs. It is bad manners and uncharitable.

Don't be captious.

Don't recite your personal experiences too frequently.

Don't forget small debts.

Don't do nothing because there is nothing to do.

Don't rely on what is termed "pull" for promotion or advancement. Your own exertions will procure

you a solid esteem infinitely more useful than the recommendations of men in high places bestowed upon your father's son.

Don't by any chance mention a lady's name at mess. This rule is as good as it is old.

Don't talk loud at mess; or monopolize the conversation.

Don't use strong language at mess. Rudeness from a boy's lips becomes an insult from a man's.

"There are others, but these will give you an idea of the kind of ethics that prevail among the officers and to a great extent among the men while in actual service and under the control of the commander."

"How long must you serve as cadet before becoming a midshipman, which, I understand, is the lowest officer's grade?"

"There are no midshipmen in the American Navy, as, I believe, they are called in the English service. Our Senior cadets hold officers' rank equivalent to second lieutenant in the army."

"And are these *Don'ts* that you have just mentioned part of the regulations for an officer?"

"They are contained in the Officers' Manual detailing the customs of the service and other matters of practical import, the same as mili-

tary courtesy or *esprit de corps* in the Army and Navy."

Father Martin was pleased, and later on, in the company of the priests from the Cathedral to whom he related the above interview, said that it would be a good thing if some of the instructions imparted to officers and cadets in the Army and Navy were given in our seminaries for the training of officers in the spiritual militia. It might help the cultivation of the natural virtues before they become impregnated with a supernatural asceticism, which, if grafted upon an imperfect understanding of truthfulness, order, discipline and respect for as well as confidence in authority, often begets that hybrid virtue of perfunctory attendance to duty which is nearest to and at times worse than neglect.

A strange result of the young officer's visit to his sister at the Convent was the impression it left on the religious of that community as a body.

Some days after his departure, the Mistress of Novices, encountering Father Martin in the garden, explained the seeming partiality that had been accorded the young man who not only

called every day during his furlough of two weeks to talk with his sister, but had the freedom of the chapel, where he played the organ, and of the grounds which are for the most part rigorously guarded against strangers, especially men who have no professional business with the Convent authorities.

"We do not as a rule permit, certainly we do not encourage frequent or protracted visiting to the young novices, even by relatives or parents, for it distracts them and weakens their religious purpose. But in the case of young Mr. Oliphant we have had no scruple. His influence has been remarkably beneficial, not merely in fostering her vocation as a nun, but in creating the impression of respect for religious dignity —perhaps I should say womanly dignity, though that hardly conveys what I mean, since as a gentleman he is of course courteous to the ladies whom he meets here. In the first place, he was punctual in observing the hour when his sister could see him, and he never presumed on the slightest privilege in prolonging his interview. Adele is a dear child and will in time develop into an excellent religious. She has remarkable talent, while her good sense will not allow her to overestimate its value or to

depreciate lesser gifts in others. But she is of a wilful and, I often think, obstinate disposition; has no regard for regulations where her impulses are active. On this account she has caused us a good deal of anxiety because her example is contagious, since she is both liked and admired, especially by the younger girls around her. Like all generous natures she readily acknowledges her fault when she is made aware of it or corrected."

"And has her brother helped her to overcome the defect?"

"Yes, to a very large degree. He did what we could hardly have effected in so short a time by admonition or correction. She once wrote to him, mentioning her difficulty in self-conquest, saying, I think, rather in jest than in a confessional mood, that she was getting knocks by the cartload which she hoped would make her less of a tyrant than she had been to the younger children at home; and that she thought a year in the novitiate would also do him good who was as impetuous and self-willed as herself.

"His reply was characteristic. He copied out some of the military regulations to show what he was going through for the honor of the

militia and his country. Then he added his comments, something like this:

"'There is no "Come, dear Al, this is not the right way," or "My dear child, let me show you how to do this," with the lovely face of a sweet nun hovering about you and setting you right. You simply get your instructions, and if you disobey or neglect them, you get the dickens. What the commanding officer leaves unsaid is supplied by the community of the boys. If you have any oddities of disposition, temper, or are inclined to braggadocio, show-off, pettiness or meanness, the boys set about curing you in short order, and though hazing is forbidden, there are many ways of making life hot for you while in uniform which one doesn't soon forget.' Something like this he repeated in successive letters.

"We let her read them to the other novices, and it proved a good lesson. She would think of 'poor Alfred' whenever any task came hard, or she was tempted to pout or fly off at a tangent, and if she forgot, we reminded her.

"Now since he has come here she has asked him innumerable details about his life at the military academy, and I think she could pass a tolerably good examination on the duties of a naval cadet. One result of her information,

coupled with admiration for her brother, who is really a fine specimen of the young naval officer, is that she quotes Annapolis Academy regulations on all occasions as examples of order and punctuality. Then there are the rules of military courtesy, mutual helpfulness, bravery and courage—qualities essential to a good seaman and implying forgetfulness of self, *esprit de corps* and generous camaraderie, endurance and sacrifice, silence under certain stresses, action without words, absolute obedience whatever personal judgment or feeling may dictate. In short, a good officer in the navy has the makings of a saint without pretentions, and if he were a religious he would put us all to shame."

Father Martin thought of his talks with the young man, what he himself had observed and learnt. It occurred to him that St. Ignatius could never have organized his Society as he did if he had not had the military training which caused him to fight for his King at Pampeluna, *sans peur et sans reproche.* He knew also that the nun beside him derived much of her good sense and brave spirit from the holy Rule modelled after that of the *Militia Christi,* whose life-business was to fight for the greater glory of God, the Generalissimo.

CHAPTER XVII

The Chaplain's Apology for Being Satirical

As already told, the weekly visits to the Chaplain's quarters not only became the source of pleasant entertainment such as makes the lives of priests mutually helpful, but also furnished much intellectual information.

Father Martin had announced that he would spend this year's vacation in the salubrious shades of Saint Catherine's. The place was new to him, and thus amply satisfied the natural craving for periodical change. Moreover it was not easy to get a substitute, although there would be someone to release him for the two weeks during which the Sisters were in retreat. He had no taste for the conventional frequentings of the seashore during the hot season, and used to quote the Roman poet's lines:

Flammiferis tellus radiis exusta dehiscit
Candentique globo medius coquit aethera fervor

which he parodied into

> Folks idle and broil on the boardwalk
> Preparing for roasting in hell;
> Indulging in ice with hot-air talk
> On the porch of the N. N. Hotel.

Whilst he rarely visited his neighbors, even at the Cathedral, he was glad to meet priests in his own rooms. One of his regular callers was the Capuchin Father Bonaventure, who came to hear the confessions regularly at St. Catherine's each week. The two men had like tastes, besides being well equipped in intellectual matters. They had travelled, and knew men and things at home and abroad. The carpenter had found time to give a suitable abode to Father Martin's choice library. Thus the two friends found it easy and agreeable diversion to discuss literary and ethical or theological problems amid the books which lined up around the four walls in stately rows.

Here Thalia and her graceful sisters disported themselves in view of the solemn theologians on the shelves, under the leadership of Apollo, and amid the music of pastoral reeds and the applause of the genial shepherds. For, although to the "parochial" intellect there

is a dryness in the heavily bound leaves of dusty old tomes, the student of morals, such as the priest by his very vocation, finds in them a something that is both interesting and instructive. To him "the world is a book in folio, printed all with God's great works in letters capital"; and hence the "Amoenitates literariae" of the medieval monks, and the "Curiosa" of the period when printing came to aid the literary instinct to unfold its new flowers, give forth a certain fragrance, as of thyme and lavender, which soothes the spirit and captivates the cultivated sense. This is especially true of the quaint musings left by clerics who took delight in discussing their own and their brethren's foibles, taking as it were stock of their shortcomings, and goodnaturedly offering correction or advice.

Such folia, if they were to be classified under some figurative name, might be said to belong to the genus "nettle," of which there are known to botanists about thirty varieties. For these products of the old literary byways have something pungent in them which has been styled satire. Those stinging qualities which make one naturally shrink from the touch of the nettle are not without their beneficial effects.

He who lays boldly hold of the nettle, from below, will not be hurt. The sting is most painful to him who attempts to assuage it by applying cold water to the sore spot. But, considering the qualities of the nettle, it must not be forgotten that the irritant poison is accompanied by an element that has valuable medicinal properties, such as, for example, the cure of scorbutic diseases. A venerable abbot in an old Trappist monastery on the Rhine once told me that the monks use the nettle with good effect as diet in pulmonary troubles taken from exposure to the cold.

And so it is with satire. It stings; but it also corrects, and often in those cases where the disease is spread throughout the body so as to render it inaccessible to direct diagnosis or remedy. Dryden refers to the benefit of this class of literature:

> Satire has held its place among the rest
> And is the boldest way, if not the best,
> To tell men of their foibles and their faults,
> To laugh at their vain deeds and vainer thoughts.

Ever since the days of Lucilius the touch of irony has been a favorite form of artistic criticism with the classical writers. The style of

the *Satyrae Menippae,* aiming at a combination of the true and the beautiful by making rhythmic diction the vehicle of the divine indignation which reproves vice, was perfected by Horace, Juvenal, and Persius. Fine literary form, whether in prose or verse, of itself served to attract attention, and became the apology for the boldness which held up vice, vanity, and stupidity to public reprobation and ridicule. In this way reforms have been effected which governmental power hindered by force of tradition, would have been unable to reach. The false code of honor which sanctions duelling in Continental Europe, and the extravagances of "Suffragettism" in England, might be more easily exterminated by the romance of a Don Quixote than by serious legislation or coercion. Indeed literary productions like those of Dickens in England, directed against the prison and chancery systems, or of Harriet Beecher Stowe in America, against slavery, being satirical in the sense that they exaggerated certain public abuses, have done more than statutes toward correcting the evils they attacked, for they aroused public sentiment to recognize and combat the abuses.

Satire must of course keep within the limits

of esthetic propriety. There is a species of nettle that is vicious without being medicinal. It is known as the "Devil's Leaf" or "Urtica urentissima." In letters, this kind of nettle is represented by the sarcasm or irony which seeks merely to inject its virus, and which exudes from its vicious nature the bicarbonate of ammonia its system is overcharged with. This sort of acridity has really no place in literature, since the latter is properly an expression of the beautiful and of that order or moderation which is an essential element of all true art.

It is not surprising, in view of the moral force inherent in the right use of satire, that the clergy should be found as authors of a very large part of this class of writing. The attraction of truth, the love of the beautiful which is but another phase of the expression of truth, and the conscious sense of duty which makes the cleric a corrector of morals, public and private, render it easy for him, when wit and humor combine with his power of expression, to yield to the temptation of using satire where the slower process of appeal to the callous or disingenuous fails.

We all rather like the unostentatious corrector who points out our faults with a smile that

indicates him to be a good friend though he dislikes the devil in us. The two gentle Georges, Crabbe and Herbert, do not make us in the least angry when they strike our foibles or riddle their clerical brethren. We enjoy the clever sallies of "Father Prout" or the humor of Pastor Healy of Bray, or of Father Philip in *Handy Andy,* or "Daddy Dan" in *My New Curate.* Even when the satire is of the more pungent kind, and aimed at the false religious convictions of others, however much they may be in good faith, as in Marshall's *My Clerical Friends* or the *Comedy of Convocation,* or in those exquisite little commentaries of the "Prig," we are sure to make allowance for it, for we readily discern the good will and the true aim of the writer.

"Ridendo dicere verum quid vetat?" writes Juvenal, and we enjoy the sport of witty repartee and the handling of sharp actualities, so long as the caution of the Angelical Doctor is observed, "ut non vertatur in dissolutionem."

There is a goodly corps of satirists among the clerical brethren. One hardly cares to think of Piers Plowman's "Crede" or of his time, or of the often vulgarly sacrilegious outpourings of Rabelais, priest, physician and tramp;

though these too have their place in literature.

A great fund of material comes under the category of genial satire as a corrective of religious, civil or political, and social evils, in such volumes as the *Speculum Pastorum,* the *Parochus Jovialis,* and a large number of monastic and clerical "Zeitvertreiber" during the German humanistic period. Many of these are in the form adopted later in French literature by such writers as Bruyère; others are in the guise of sermons, much after the pattern of the great Augustinian preacher, Abraham a Sancta Clara, whom the Emperor Leopold engaged to reform the morals of the Vienna aristocracy, and whose sermons are full of humor, without being undignified in the sense of some modern sensational preaching.

Speaking of satirical preachers one should not omit to mention one of the most remarkable men of Spain, the author of *Fray Gerundio,* Father de Isla, who wrote at the time of the suspension of the Jesuits, and who made a record by effectually abolishing certain pulpit abuses in his time and country. His book, almost forgotten now, adopted the style of *Don Quixote* in order to attack the coxcombs among the cler-

ical fraternity. It is a most interesting story; but cannot be gone into here.

A delightful chastiser of irregular public morals is the author of the well-known *De Admirabili fallacia et astutia vulpeculae Reinekes.* Its name originally was *Speculum vitae aulicæ,* and its publication is credited to Hartmann Schopper (Francoford ad Moenum, 1579). But it must be much older. It is written in Latin verse, such as was common among the monastic writers. Goethe and others have since the sixteenth century made use of these old treasures among which is "Reineke Fox." There are abundant sources of satiric moralizing in forgotten corners. The *Speculum* strikes occasionally at a remiss and dissolute clergy, but is mostly concerned with the false service and adulation of aulic circles. It suits in a way for all times and countries, since it strikes at the weakness of human nature.

Adhuc in isto saeculo
Qui novit artem Reinekes
In omnibus negotiis
Et rebus est gratissimus.
Quicumque sed fallaciam
Vulpemque perversissimam
Celare nescit pectore

Vocatur niger omnibus
Inutilisque creditur,
Jacetque plenus pulvere
Ubique sordidissimo.

Speaking of "Reineke Fuchs" and its imitators in different languages, there is a curious volume, printed in 1661 at the Jesuit University Press at Prague. It suggests that the stories about Reineke Fox are not unknown in Rabbinical literature; for this Bohemian volume contains the sallies of observant Master Fox in Hebrew, with a Latin translation by a priest named Melchior Hanel. The author is a Jewish Rabbi, Barachia Nokdan. The translated title is "Parabolae Vulpium Rabbi Barachial Vikdani. Translatae ex Hebraica in Linguam Latinam." The Hebrew text has the vowel-points added to the original unpointed letters, which, as the translator informs us, was done by himself at the instance of the famous scholar and antiquary, Athanasius Kircher, S.J. The latter himself supervised the process of editing the Hebrew text. and in a prefatory "Lectori Benevolo" tells how he got the original from a certain Nicolaus Pereiscius, "immortalis memoriae viri." It is a very wholesome and interesting little volume,

written in reverent spirit, and, if properly revised, as well as vested in modern typography, might aptly serve students in Hebrew by way of varying the regular class selections from the Masoretic text of the Bible.

But it is time to stop this rambling in the bibliographical pastures of Father Martin's preserves. He did want to tell his Capuchin friend, who was quite innocent of the Spanish satirist, something more about Father de Isla, whose work was published under the pseudonym of Don Francis Lobon de Salazar, since he was a Jesuit, and the Chaplain took a mischievous pleasure in saying hard things about the monks generally, and the Jesuits in particular, because it called forth the most solemn protests on the part of Father Bonaventure. So he told him how Father de Isla's volume was put on the Index by the Inquisition, though it was removed from the "Index Librorum Prohibitorum" by the late Pontiff, Leo XIII. But the book was quite a harmless one, which effected a great reform among the brethren where it was really needed. This book is believed to have been the only Spanish work (as Reusch points out in writing about the Index) which —if we except a small pamphlet *La Invocacion*

de N. S. by Joseph de Tobar—was ever condemned by the Roman Congregation. De Tobar wrote about the time when Father de Isla published his volume.

The bookshelves of the Chaplain at St. Catherine's revealed all this and numerous other hidden curiosities, historical and pastoral, which invited reading and making of copy, for Father Martin will not let anyone take out the precious volumes, since an unscrupulous visitor had failed to return an odd copy of his *Parochus Jovialis.*

With his habitual fondness for observation he had taken notes of his impressions about men and things from time to time. As he scanned the manuscript, he found his comments not only confined to the narrow sphere of parish services, and as chaplain since he came to St. Catherine's, but also somewhat mixed, touching on divers topics that were not always, strictly speaking, within the domain of Christian edification. Nevertheless he resolved to write out what he had, and to consult a friendly editor about the advisability of having it published.

The people whom he had met in ordinary intercourse were of the ranks of the clergy, for the most part, and men and women of the religious Orders. He had viewed them—he knew it well—with a rather critical eye, and in that way it sometimes suggested itself to him that the average holy people clothed with the uniform of the heavenly militia might have some slight trouble before getting their earthly canonization claims properly certified in the office of St. Peter above.

Father Martin himself doubtless was no better than he ought to be, nor nearly as good as most of those whose peccadillos struck him as

out of harmony with their profession. But that did not alter the facts, nor wholly deprive him of the privilege of being an observer so long as he included himself in the history without calling folk names. If a secular physician who proves to be a mere quack, or a lawyer who is a shyster, is pointed out for what he is by the members of the profession, one is rather grateful for it. Among the physicians of the soul, or the doctors of canon law and their allied tribes of nurses and consultors, the discovery of fakes is not so promptly advertised. The obvious reason is that religion itself bids us be cautious about discussing the shortcomings of our brethren, notably of superiors.

Reverence is the very foundation of all religious life; and it comes naturally from those who are subject to those who represent the divine authority. The humble Christians who do not go to confession weekly or to daily Communion, because they are merely common sinners, the (kitchen) folk who say only short night prayers, or the publicans and hostlers who swear at the drunkard and the mule, but have not the courage to do it again in the confessional until the missioner comes round during Lent, have no claim, and make none, to be

salaamed with "Yer Reverence," or "Reverend Sister," or "Your Lordship," "Your Grace," and "Your Eminence"; nor are these the people one writes about, unless it be now and then in the style of Mr. Chesterton or Jacob Riis. But the élite of the social or clerical world have to be treated differently, notably by the press. Else the press should have to go out of business.

As for religious writers and editors, their business is to censure unpopular heroes and ideas; and in order that they may not forget this primary object of their existence, they are censured by the diocesan authorities. The censorship issues its standing warning silently, like a signpost at the crossroads: "Blow Your Horn." This does not mean that the editor has to blow his own horn. That would be irritating, indeed. There is nothing else for him to do but blow the horn of the other party, and keep the diocesan peace, and at the same time amuse the readers who are interested in taffy and dress notions.

It was reflections such as these that led Father Martin to the conviction that, if he wanted to be an author there was not much room for him in the religious world, unless he

stuck to his original program and purpose of telling what he saw, and what he thought of it all. If it happened to lead particular and sensitive people to believe that he was making a show of them, so much the better. It might improve them. Criticism that does not offer the means of improvement is not only useless but hurtful, in that it creates mere discontent and to no purpose.

Was he willing to face criticism, and that particularly humiliating criticism which comes with the *tu quoque* note or the old charge, "Physician, cure thyself?" He thought that it might improve him, and that would surely be so much to the good. He remembered how Moses wrote his contemporary history in the desert; how Samuel and Nathan, the priests, wrote about David; and how David himself actually set his failings and those of his brethren to music. And he took courage.

And so Father Martin's reflections became this book.

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